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THE

MYSTERIES OF PARIS;

FROM THE FRENCH

OF

M. EUGÈNE SUE.

BY

J. D. SMITH, ESQ.

ILLUSTRATED WITH

NINETEEN ENGRAVINGS ON STEEL.

DESIGNED AND EXECUTED BY T. ONWHYN, ESQ.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I

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THE MYSTERIES OF PARIS,

BY

M. EUGÈNE SUE.

These men have their own customs, women, and language: a mysterious language, crowded with wretched imagery and disgusting metaphors of blood.

Like the savages, they generally have names common among themselves; given to them either for their energy, cruelty, or some physical deformity.

We venture to describe with great diffidence some of the scenes of this story. In the first place, we fear that we shall be accused of spreading out disgusting details; and even if this is allowed, that we shall be incompetent to the task of giving a faithful, vigorous, and bold description of the manners and customs of these people.

In describing these scenes, we have almost trembled, and have hardly escaped from a nervous trepidation; we will not say anxiety, for fear we may be accused of ridiculous affectation. In thinking that perhaps our readers might participate in these feelings, we have had some doubts whether we ought to persevere in our story; whether such descriptions should be placed before the public. We have had our doubts; and without the very imperious exigencies of the narrative, we should regret having placed in such a horrible quarter the commencement of our tale. We count a little, however, on that curiosity which a gloomy drama is apt to produce; and besides, we believe in the efficacy of contrasts. In this view of the case, it is perhaps well to describe certain beings whose sombre, energetic, and perhaps crude characters, will serve as a set-off to those of a nature entirely different.

The reader, thus informed of the nature of the excursion we intend to make among the people of this infernal race, who fill our prisons and galleys, and whose blood stains our scaffolds, will perhaps follow us. Doubtless this investigation will be new for him; but we assure him that after he has put his foot on the first round of the ladder, as he mounts, and as the tale proceeds, the atmosphere will become clearer and more pure. * *

On the 13th of December, 1838, a cold and rainy evening, a man of athletic form, wearing a miserable *blouse*, crossed the Pont au Change and plunged into the cité, a labyrinth of obscure, crooked, and narrow streets, which extend from the Palais de Justice to Nôtre Dame.

The quarter or district of the Palais de Justice, very circumscribed and well watered, is, nevertheless, the asylum or resort of the

rogues of Paris. Is it not strange, or rather, is there not a fatality, an irresistible attraction thus drawing these criminals around the formidable tribunal which condemns them to the prison, the galleys, or the scaffold? On this night the wind blew in heavy gusts down the narrow streets of this gloomy district, and the pale light of the suspended lamps, shaken by the winds, was reflected in the dark stream of turgid water which flowed down the muddy streets. Wretched houses, with scarcely a window, and those of worm-eaten frames, without any glass; dark, infectious-looking alleys led to still darker looking staircases, so steep that they could only be ascended by the aid of ropes fastened to the damp walls by iron hooks; the lower stories of some of these houses were occupied by sellers of charcoal, tripe-men, or venders of impure meat; and notwithstanding the little value of these commodities, the windows of the miserable shops were barred with iron, so much did the owners fear the bold robbers of this quarter.

The man of whom we have spoken, on entering the Rue aux Feves, situated in the middle of the cité, slackened his pace considerably: he felt himself on his own ground. The night was dark, the rain fell in torrents, and sharp gusts of wind and rain beat against the walls; the clock of the Palais de Justice, in the distance, struck ten; some women sheltered under the heavy-arched doorways (gloomy and obscure as caverns,) were singing in a subdued tone some popular airs.

One of these creatures was without doubt known by the man of whom we have spoken, for he stopped suddenly before her, and seized her by the arm. The unfortunate creature drew back, and said, with a timid voice,

"Good-night, Chourineur" (this word means one who gives a blow with a knife.)

This man had thus been called in the galleys.

"Is it thou, La Goualeuse? (singer)" said the man in the blouse; "thou must pay for my brandy, or I'll make thee dance without music."

"I have no money," said the trembling girl, for this man was much feared in the quarter.

"If thy purse is empty, the Ogresse of the tapis-franc will give thee credit for thy pretty face."

"My God! I already owe her the rent of the clothes I have on my back."

"Ah! thou makest difficulties!" cried the Chourineur, giving the unfortunate wretch a random blow with his fist in the dark, which made her utter a piercing cry.

"That is nothing, my girl—it is only a warning." Hardly had he said these words when he cried, with a horrible oath, "I am hit in my arms—thou hast scratched me with thy scissors!" and foaming with rage, he rushed in pursuit of La Goualeuse down the dark alley.

"Come no nearer," she said, "or I'll dig thine eyes out with my scissors; I have done nothing to thee, why hast thou struck me?"

"I am going to tell thee," cried the bandit, still groping down the alley; "Ah! I've got thee, and now I'll make thee dance," he added, seizing with his immense and powerful hands a delicate and slender arm. "It is thou who shalt dance!" said a hoarse voice. "A man! is it thou, Bras-Rouge? Answer me, and don't squeeze so hard. I am in the entrance of thy house, it must be thou." "It is not Bras-Rouge," said the voice. "Good! if it s not a friend, there's blood to be shed," cried the Chourineur; "but to whom belongs this little paw that I have hold of?"

"It is the fellow of this."

Under the soft and delicate skin of the hand that now seized him quickly by the throat, the Chourineur could feel nerves and muscles of steel.

La Goualeuse, who had fled to the bottom of the alley, and mounted a few steps of the staircase, stopped a moment, and cried out to her unknown defender, "Oh! thank you, sir, for having taken my part, Chourineur struck me because I would not pay for some brandy. I revenged myself, but I did not do him much harm with my scissors. Now I am in safety, take care of yourself. He is the *Chourineur*."

The terror that this man caused was great. "But don't you hear me? I tell you it is the Chourineur!" repeated La Goualeuse. "And I am a bandit, who is not a coward," said the unknown then he was silent, but the noise of a deadly conflict was heard for some seconds. "Dost thou wish that I should kill thee?" cried the bandit, making a violent effort to get rid of his adversary, who he found possessed great strength. "Good, good, thou art going to pay for La Goualeuse and thyself," he added, grinding his teeth.

"Pay! in money of my fists? Yes," answered the unknown.

"If thou dost not let go my cravat, I'll bite thy nose," said the almost strangled Chourineur.

"I have too short a nose, my man, and thou doesn't see too clear."

"Come then, under the lamp."

"Come," repeated the unknown, "and we'll look at the whites of each other's eyes;" and throwing himself on the Chourineur, whom he still held by the throat, he backed into the entrance of the alley; then pushing him violently, he threw him into the street, hardly lighted by the wretched hanging lamp. The bandit fell, but recovering himself immediately, rushed with fury on the unknown, whose small and slender figure gave no indication of the great strength he had displayed.

The Chourineur, although of an athletic make, and very expert in that sort of pugilism which is vulgarly called *La Savette*, found his master.

The unknown tripped up his heels, and with wonderful dexterity threw him twice.

Not yet willing to acknowledge himself conquered, the Chourineur returned to the charge, foaming with rage; then the defender of La Goualeuse, changing quickly his mode of fighting, rained down on the head of the bandit a torrent of blows with his fists, which struck as if they were made of iron.

These blows, worthy the envy and admiration of Jack Turner, one of the most famous boxers of London, were so entirely out of all the rules of La Savette, that the Chourineur was donbly stunned, and, for the third time, fell upon the pavement like an ox, murmuring, "I have enongh."

"If he gives up, have pity on him; don't kill him," said La Goualeuse, who during this conflict had advanced to the doorway of the house of Bras-Rouge; then she added, with astonishment, "But who are you, then? Except the Maitre d'Ecole, there is nobody, from the Rue Saint-Eloi to Nôtre Dame, capable of fighting the Chourineur. I thank you much, sir: alas! if it had not been for you, he would have cruelly beaten me." The unknown, instead of answering this woman, listened attentively to her voice.

Never had a sound more sweet, more silvery, more soft, reached his ears; he endeavoured to catch a glimpse of her face, but the night was too dark, the light from the lamp too feeble.

After having remained some minutes immovable, the Chourineur raised himself and sat up.

"Take care!" said La Goualeuse, retreat into the alley, and drawing her protector by the arm; "take care! perhaps he will try to revenge himself."

"Be quiet, my girl; if he wants any more, I am ready to serve him."

The brigand heard these words, "No—no," said he; "for to-day I have had enough; I wont have any more; another time, I say nothing—if I meet you."

"Art thou not content? art thou complaining?" cried the unknown, with a menacing voice. Is it that I have fought in a foul manner?"

"No, no, I don't complain; thou art a trump," said the brigand, in a peevish tone, but with that sort of respect which physical force always inspires in people of that class; "thou hast rinsed me, and except the Maitre d' Ecole, who can eat three Herculeses for breakfast, no one to this hour had put his foot on my head."

"Well! what then?"

"What then? why, I have found my master, that's all: you'll find yours one of these days; sooner or later every one finds his —that which is sure is, that now thou hast put the Chourineur under thy feet, thou canst do as thou pleasest in the cité. All the women will be thy slaves; Ogres and Ogresses will not dare to refuse to give thee credit." "Who art thou, then? If thou art a robber I am not thy man." "I have given blows with a knife, it is true, because when my blood rushes to my head I always see red, and I must strike. But I have paid for my chourinades in going fifteen years to the galleys. I finished my time. I owe nothing to the judges, and I have never robbed; thou mayest ask La Goualeuse!"

"It is true; he is not a robber," said the latter.

"Well, come and take a glass of brandy with me, and we shall become acquainted," said the unknown. "Come, let's have no ill feeling."

"Now that is genteel—thou art my master, I own it—thou knowest how to play with fists; these last blows came down like a hailstone. Thunder! how they poured on my sconce—I never have felt anything like it—just like a blacksmith's hammer—a new game, I guess—thou must teach me.'

"I'll begin as soon as thou wilt."

"Not with me—not with me—I feel yet a little dizzy; but thou must know Bras-Rouge, as thou wast in the alley of his house."

"Bras-Rouge?" said the unknown, surprised at this question; "does nobody but Bras-Rouge live in this house?"

"Yes, my man. Bras-Rouge has his own reasons for not desiring neighbours," said the Chourineur, smiling in a significant manner.

"Well! so much the better for mine," said the unknown, who seemed desirous of putting a stop to the conversation. "I don't know *Bras-Rouge* any more than I know Bras Noir; it rained hard, and I stepped in the alley for shelter: thou wast beating this poor girl, and I beat thee, that's all."

"Just so; besides, I dont want to know anything of thine affairs: those who stand in need of the services of Bras-Rouge don't tell it to all Rome: don't say any more about it:" then turning to La Goualeuse, he said, "On my faith, thou art a good girl. I gave thee a tap on the head, and thou gavest me a punch with your scissors; it was only in fun: but what was really kind on your part was, that thou didst not wish that madman there to thrash me when I cried enough. Thou shalt come and drink with us; this gentleman pays! By-the-by, my man, instead of going to drink, suppose we go and sup at the Lapin Blanc: it is a tapis-franc." "Agreed; I'll pay for supper. Wilt thou come, La Goualeuse?" said the unknown.

"Oh! I was very hungry," she answered, "but this fight has made me heart-sick; I have no more appetite."

"Bah! bah! that'll come when once at the table; the cooking at the Lapin Blanc is first-rate." The three individuals, now on the most friendly footing, turned their steps towards the tavern.

During the whole time of the conflict between the unknown and the Chourineur, a coalman of gigantic stature, concealed in another alley, had watched with anxiety the chances of the combat, without having lent (as has been seen) the least assistance to either of the adversaries; and when the trio started for the tapis-franc, the coalman followed them.

The bandit and La Goualeuse entered first; the unknown was about following, when the coal-merchant approached, and whispered in a most respectful tone, in English, "My Lord—take care!"

The unknown shrugged his shoulders and joined his companions. The coalman hovered near the door, listening with great attention, and from time to time peeping through a small hole of the wretched window, which, as is usual in those dens, was thickly incrusted with white paint on the inside.

CHAPTER II.

THE OGRESSE.

THE tavern of the *Lapin Blanc* is situated about half way down the street aux Feves; it occupies the lower story of a lofty house with two large windows, called *a guillotine*. Above the door of a dark vaulted alley was suspended an oblong, cracked lantern, on which was painted in red letters, "*Here lodgings can be had for the night.*"

Chourineur, Goualeuse, and the unknown, entered the tavern.

It was a long, low room, into which they entered, with smoky ceiling and black rafters, badly lighted by the murky rays of a miserable lamp. The whitewashed walls were covered with vulgar sketches, or with sentences in slang; the floor of beaten earth and salt was covered with mud; an armful of straw was placed at the foot of the counter or bar of the *Ogresse* instead of a carpet, and this was situated near the door, and under the lamp on each side of this room there was placed six tables, one end of each, as well as the benches, nailed to the wall: at the farther end of the room a door opened into the kitchen; on the right, near the bar, another gave an exit into the alley, which led to miserable apartments, where one can lodge for three sous the night—and now a few words about the *Ogresse* and her guests.

She was called Mother *Ponisse*, and her threefold employment was to keep the tavern, take in lodgers by the night, and to rent out clothes to the miserable beings who swarm in these foul streets.

The Ogresse was about forty years of age, tall, robust, and corpulent, with a red face and something of a beard; her rough and masculine voice, her immense arms and large hands, all indicated no common strength; her hat was trimmed with a faded red and yellow riband; a tippet of rabbit skin was crossed on her bosom and tied behind her back; her dress of green woollen

so short, that her black sabots (wooden shoes) were seen, half burned by a foot-stove; and, finally, her copper-coloured complexion, much inflamed by the use of strong drink.

The counter, lined with lead, was furnished with jugs with iron hoops, and different-sized measures of tin; on a small shelf could be seen many glass flacons, moulded in the form of the emperor: these bottles were filled with adulterated liquors of a rose and green colour, known by the name of *parfait amour* and *consolation:* finally, a large black cat, with yellow eyes, crouched near the Ogresse, seemed the familiar spirit of this place.

By a contrast that almost seems impossible, if we did not know that the human breast is an impenetrable abyss—a holy Easter branch, bought at the church by the Ogresse, was placed behind the box of an ancient cuckoo clock. Two men, with sinister looks, bristling beards, and clothed almost in rags, had hardly touched the jug of wine that had been served to them, but were whispering, evidently in an unquiet and uneasy manner.

One of them especially, who was very pale, almost livid, kept continually drawing his wretched Greek cap over his eyes. He held his left hand concealed, never using it except when compelled by necessity. At a short distance was seated a young man of hardly sixteen years, with a drunken, pale, and livid look, smoking a short white pipe; his long, black hair floated on his shoulders: this youth was a fine specimen of juvenile precocity. He was leaning against the wall, with his hands in the pockets of his blouse, and he never took the pipe from his mouth except to drink of the brandy which stood before him. The other inmates of the tapis-franc, male or female, deserve no particular notice; their physiognomies were ferocious or dull, their silence sombre or stupid: such were the guests of the tapis-franc, where the unknown, the Chourineur, and La Goualeuse entered. These three last personages play so important a part in our story that we could not fail to place them in bold relief.

The Chourineur was a man of tall stature, athletic make, with flax-coloured hair, almost white, heavy dark eyebrows, and enormous whiskers of burning red. Poverty, the rude labour at the galleys in the scorching sun, had bronzed his skin to that dark olive, which may be said to be peculiar to galley-slaves; notwithstanding his terrrible name, the features of this man intimated a more brutal audacity than ferocity, although the back part of his head

most singularly developed, announced the preponderance of carnal and murderous appetites. The Chourineur was dressed in a miserable blouse, trowsers of velveteen, which formerly had been green, but no colour could now be distinguished, from the heavy coating of mud.

By a strange anomaly, the face of La Goualeuse presented one of those angelic and lovely expressions which preserve their ideality even in the midst of depravity, as if the creature were unable to efface by its vices the noble stamp which God has placed on the forehead of some privileged beings.

The Goualeuse had passed her sixteenth year. Her round, white forehead, surmounted a visage of most perfect oval; her long and almost curling eyelashes half concealed her large, blue eyes; her small, rosy mouth, and Grecian nose, her dimpled chin, and downy cheek, were lovely in the extreme; from each side of her lofty temples a tress of pale auburn hair descended low on her cheek, then passing behind the small ear of ivory, was fastened under a sort of blue checked handkerchief which she wore upon her head, tied à la Marmotte. A string of coral beads encircled her beautiful throat, of most dazzling whiteness; her dress, of blue stuff, was much too large, and scarcely concealed her round and elastic form; a miserable little orange shawl with blue fringe, crossed on her bosom, completed her attire. The charming voice of La Goualeuse had attracted the attention of her unknown defender; in effect, this voice, so sweet and harmonious, had such an' irresistible attraction, that the crowd of miserable wretches, in the midst of whom she lived, often begged her to sing, and in listening to her touching notes, had surnamed her La Goualeuse (singer).

She had also received another name, due, no doubt, to the innocent expression of her face; they called her Fleur de Marie, which in slang means virgin.

We wish we could convey to the reader the singular impression made upon us when, in the midst of this vocabulary, redolent with words of blood, and murder, and theft, we came to this one so poetical, so metaphorical, so religious. Fleur de Marie—it is like a lily rearing its snow-white head on a field of carnage! Singular contrast, strange change! the inventors of this frightful language have dared to look up to a holy poesy—they have added another charm to the words which they wish to express.

These reflections, do they not lead us to believe, in thinking also of other contrasts, which break the horrible monotony of the most criminal existence, that certain principles of piety and morality, innate, as it were, cast here and there their sparkling light on some dark, gloomy mind. Malefactors all of one description are phenomena sufficiently rare.

The unknown defender of La Goualeuse (we shall call him Rodolphe) was about thirty years of age, and of a middling size; his slight and perfectly-proportioned figure gave no indication of the great strength which he had shewn in the contest with the Chourineur. It had been difficult to assign any certain character to the physiognomy of Rodolphe—it united the strangest contrasts; his features were regularly handsome, too handsome for a man; his delicately-pale complexion, his large brown eyes, almost always half closed, his lounging gait, his ironical smile, seemed to announce a dissipated man, whose constitution was, as yet, only weakened by the aristocratic excesses of opulent life. Yet, notwithstanding his white and delicate hands, Rodolphe had just knocked down one of the most robust and renowned bandits of this resort of robbers.

We say aristocratic excess, because the intoxication proceeding from, or caused by, generous wine, is very different from that caused by a miserable adulterated drink; in a word, to the eyes of an observer, an excess differs as much in symptoms as in kind and species.

Certain furrows on the brow of Rodolphe revealed profound thought, essentially a contemplative man; yet the firmness of the contour of his mouth, his carriage of the head, somewhat bold and imperious, betrayed the man of action, whose physical force and courage would always exercise on the multitude an irresistible ascendancy. Often his look seemed charged with a melancholy sadness, and all that commiseration has the most helpful, all that pity has the most touching, was pictured on his countenance; at other times, on the contrary, the expression of Rodolphe became hard and wicked; his features expressed so much disdain and cruelty, that one could scarcely believe they could ever be susceptible of any gentle emotion. The continuation of this story will show what was capable of calling forth passions and feelings so opposite in their nature.

In his conflict with the Chourineur, Rodolphe had shown nei-

ther anger nor hatred against an adversary so unworthy. Confiding in his strength, in his address, in his agility, he had experienced no emotion but that of contempt for the sort of brute he threw on the ground. To finish the portrait of Rodolphe, we will say that his hair was of clear chestnut, as were his nobly-arched eyebrows; he wore a fine silken moustache, and his chin, a little prominent, was most carefully shaved; otherwise, the manners and language he used, or affected to use, with incredible ease, gave him a complete resemblance to the guests of the Ogresse. His symmetrical neck, modelled like an Indian Bacchus, was encompassed by a black cravat, negligently tied, with the ends falling on the bosom of his blouse, whose faded colour announced its antiquity; his shoes were nailed with a double row of nails, and, save his hands of dazzling whiteness, nothing in his dress distinguished him from the other inmates; while his air of resolution, and his audacious serenity, placed between him and them an immeasurable distance.

On entering the tapis-franc, the Chourineur, placing one of his large hairy hands on the shoulder of Rodolphe, cried,

"A greeting for the Chourineur's master. Yes, friends, this young man has just been sousing me; fair notice to those who have any desire to have their skulls cracked or backs broken, including also the Maitre d'Ecole, who this time will find his master, I'll answer for it. I'll bet."

At these words, from the Ogresse to the very least of the inmates of the tapis-franc, all eyes were turned towards the conqueror of the Chourineur with cowardly respect. Some of them, drawing their jugs to the end of their tables, made room for Rodolphe, if he might wish to seat himself; while others gathered around the Chourineur to learn some details of the unknown, who had just made such a victorious débût into their society. Even the Ogresse herself smiled most graciously on Rodolphe; and, a thing unheard of in the annals of the tapis-franc, even raised herself from her place at the bar, and came to ask Rodolphe what she should serve to him and his company, an attention she had never paid to the Maitre d'Ecole, that famous villain who had made even the Chourineur tremble.

One of the two men whom we have mentioned, he who kept his hand so carefully concealed, leaned over towards the Ogresse as she wiped the table for Rodolphe, and said, in a hoarse voice,

"Has the Maitre d' Ecole been here to-day?"

"No," said Mother Ponisse.

"Yesterday?" "Yes, he came." "With his wife?" "Bah! do you take me for a spy, with your questioning? do you think I am going to denounce my guests?" said the Ogresse, in a brutal manner.

"I have a rendezvous with the Maitre d'Ecole this night; we have some business together."

"That must be something very nice, assassins as you are!"

"Assassins!" said the irritated bandit; "it is from them you make your living!"

"Come, come, will you hold your tongue?" cried the Ogresse, "or I'll throw this jug at your head."

The cowardly wretch sat down, growling.

Fleur de Marie, as she came in, had exchanged a look of friendly intelligence with the young man we have mentioned.

The Chourineur said to him, "Ah! Barbillion, always drinking brandy?"

"Always. I'd rather fast and wear old shoes, than go without brandy in my throat and tobacco in my pipe," said the young man in a cracked voice, without changing his position, and puffing out volumes of smoke.

"Good-evening, Fleur de Marie," answered the Ogresse, inspecting closely the vestments which covered the unfortunate; "ah, it is a pleasure to rent one's things to you. You are a neat little puss. I never would have let such a fine orange shawl to such creatures as La Tourneuse or the Tête de Mort. But I have taken good care of you since you came from prison, and I must confess you are the best creature in all the cité."

"Hollo, mother!" said Rodolphe, "I see you have got some holy wood on your clock," pointing with his finger to the Easter Bough, placed behind the cuckoo.

"Well, would you have one like an heathen?" answered the horrible woman; and then speaking to La Goualeuse, "Come, won't you give us one of your songs?" "After supper, Mother Ponisse," said the Chourineur. "And what will you have, my good fellow?" said she to Rodolphe, desiring to make him welcome, so that she might count upon his assistance when required.

"Ask the Chourineur, mother; it is his feast, but I pay."

"Well, what do you want for supper?" said the Ogresse, turning to the bandit, "what do you want, wicked dog!"

"Two measures of wine at twelve sous, three small loaves of fresh bread, and a harlequin (a mixture of broken victuals)," cried the Chourineur, after having hesitated a while.

"I see that you are a famous drinker, and have a great passion for harlequins."

"Well, and are you hungry now?" said the Chourineur to La Goualeuse; "are you hungry?"

"Now! Chourineur."

"Do you like anything better than a harlequin, my girl?" said Rodolphe.

"Oh no! my hunger is all gone."

"But why don't you look at my master?" said the Chourineur, with a coarse laugh, and pointing at Rodolphe with his finger; "why don't you look at him?" The Goualeuse blushed, and cast down her eyes without answering.

After a short time, the Ogresse came herself, and placed on the table of Rodolphe a jug of wine, some bread, and the harlequin, which we shall not attempt to describe to our readers, but which the Chourineur seemed to find perfectly to his taste, for he cried,

"What a dish; ye gods! what a dish! it is like an omnibus! there is something for all tastes; for those who like fat and those who like lean: for those like pepper and those who like sugar—chickens' legs and fishes tails, cutlet's bones and pie crust, a fry, cheese, vegetables, birds' heads, crackers, and salad—now do eat, La Goualeuse, it is choice—have you been feasting to-day?"

"Feasting! ah, yes; I have eaten, as usual, this morning my penny-worth of bread and milk."

The entrance of a new-comer into the tavern interrupted all conversation, and attracted all attention. He was a man of about middle age, strong and robust, wearing a jacket and cap, perfectly conversant with the usages of the tapis-franc, and speaking in Argot; he demanded some supper.

Although this stranger was not a regular lounger at the tapis-franc, he now attracted no more attention, for he was *known*. To recognise these fellows, robbers, like honest men, rarely fail.

The new-comer placed himself in such a position that he might observe the two men of whom we have spoken: he scarcely took

his eyes from off them; but they were so placed, that they could not see that they were watched.

Notwithstanding his audacity, the Chourineur showed much deference to Rodolphe, and did not dare to address him familiarly. This man had no respect for the laws, but he respected physical strength. "In faith," said he, "although you have made me dance, yet I am glad I have met you." "Because you find the harlequin to your taste?" "In the first place; and then I scorch to see you handle the Maitre d'Ecole; he has always rinsed me, and I want to see him washed in return; oh, that will do me good."

"Ah, ah! do you think I am going to jump on the Maitre d'Ecole like a bulldog, just to amuse you?" "No, but he will jump on you as soon as he hears that you are stronger than he," answered the Chourineur, rubbing his hands. "I have money enough left to give him his change," said Rodolphe, carelessly; "but what horrid weather; suppose we have some brandy and sugar; perhaps it will make La Goualeuse find her voice." "Agreed," said the Chourineur; "and to become acquainted, we'll just say who we are," added Rodolphe.

"White Hair, nicknamed the Chourineur, liberated galley-slave, workman among the floating woods of the *Quai Saint Paul*—frozen during the winter, roasted in summer—behold my character," said the guest of Rodolphe, making the military salute with his left hand. "And you, my master, this is the first time I have seen you in the cité. I don't mean to reproach you, but you have entered marching on my scull and beating the drum on my hide. Thunder and lightning, what music! above all those last touches, just as you finished. I can't help thinking about it; I guess you tried to excel. But have you no other trade but that of rinsing the Chourineur?"

"I am a painter of fans, and I am called Rodolphe." "Painter of fans? ah! that is the reason your hands are so white," said the Chourineur. "Never mind, if all your workmen are like you, it appears that your trade requires a great deal of strength. But since you are a workman, and an honest one, I don't doubt, why do you come to a tapis-franc, where you will only meet thieves and robbers, or a liberated galley-slave like me, who can't go anywhere else?"

"I come here because I like good society."

"Hum! hum!" cried the Chourineur, shaking his head with an air of doubt. "I found you in the alley of Bras-Rouge; enough—sufficient. You say you don't know him?"

"I want to know if you are going to talk any more to me of Bras-Rouge, whom the devil confound, that is, if his majesty pleases!"

"Hold, master; you are a little suspicious of me, and you are not wrong; but if you wish, I'll tell you my history, on condition that you will teach me how to strike those blows which made me smell brimstone."

"I consent, Chourineur; you shall tell me your story, and then La Goualeuse shall tell hers."

"Agreed," answered the Chourineur. "The weather is too bad even to put a constable out of doors—that will amuse us. Are you agreed, La Goualeuse?"

"Oh, yes! but it will not take me long," said Fleur de Marie. "And you will tell yours, comrade Rodolphe?" added the Chourineur. "Yes, I'll begin." "Painter of fans!" said La Goualeuse; "it is a nice trade." "And how much do you gain at such a break-back calling as that?" said the Chourineur. "I'll begin my story," answered Rodolphe. "My best day's work brings me in four francs, sometimes five, during the long days of summer." "And do you walk about much?" "Yes, as long as I have money. In the first place, I pay six sous for my bed."

"Pardon me,—*my Lord*—you pay six sous for your lodging!" said the Chourineur, touching his cap.

This word—*my Lord*—ironically used by the bandit, caused Rodolphe to smile imperceptibly. He continued: "Oh, I like to be comfortable and neat." "Here's a peer of France, a banker, a millionaire," cried the Chourineur; "he lodges for six sous!" "Added to that," said Rodolphe, "four sous for tobacco, that makes ten; four sous for breakfast, fourteen; fifteen for dinner, one or two for brandy, makes about thirty sous a day. I have no need to work all the day: the rest of the time I frolic."

"And your family?" said La Goualeuse.

"Dead, during the cholera," answered Rodolphe. "What trade did they follow?" asked La Goualeuse. "Old clothes merchants, under the market, dealers in rags." "And how much did you get for their stock?" said the Chourineur.

"I was too young—my guardian sold it; when I came of age, he gave me thirty francs—my sole heritage."

"Who is your master at present?" asked the Chourineur.

"My master? he is called Borel, and lives in the Rue des Bourdonnais; a fool, but a brute; a robber, but a miser; he'd rather lose an eye than pay his workmen; there's his description; if he should be lost let him be lost; don't bring him back to his shop. I have been bound to him since I was fifteen; I drew a lucky number at the Conscription; I live in the Rue de la Juiverie, No. 4, first floor in front; I am called Rodolphe Durand; so now you have my history."

"Now your turn, La Goualeuse," said the Chourineur; "I'll reserve my story for the desert."

CHAPTER III.

HISTORY OF LA GOUALEUSE.

"Let us begin at the beginning," said the Chourineur. "Yes; your parents?" added Rodolphe. "I never knew them," said Fleur de Marie. "Ah, bah!" observed the Chourineur; "neither seen nor known; born under a cabbage, as we say to children; quite droll, I declare, La Goualeuse! we belong to the same family." "You also, Chourineur?" "Yes, a foundling of the streets of Paris, just like you, my dear." "And who brought you up, La Goualeuse?" asked Rodolphe. "I don't know. The farthest back I can recollect was when I was about seven years old; I was with an old borgnesse (one-eyed woman) who was nicknamed La Chouette (owl), because she had a hooked nose, one round green eye, and because she resembled an owl with one eye torn out."

"Ha! ha! ha! I can see her now, La Chouette," cried the Chourineur, laughing. "La Borgnesse," continued Fleur de Marie, "made me sell barley-sugar, every evening, on the Pont Neuf; it was a way to ask alms: if, on returning, I did not bring with me ten sous at least, La Chouette always beat me, instead of giving me my supper." "I understand, my dear," said the Chourineur, "a kick instead of bread, with a box on the ear for butter?" "Oh! my God, yes." "Are you sure that this woman was not your mother?" asked Rodolphe. "I am very sure, for La Chouette often reproached me for having neither father nor mother: said that she had picked me up in the street." "Thus,"

said the Chourineur, "you danced for your supper, when you came home without ten sous?" "Add a glass of water, and then I was sent shivering to rest on a heap of straw—my God! straw is commonly thought to be very warm: oh! it is a mistake." "Straw!" cried the Chourineur, "you are right my dear; I'd as soon sleep on ice; a manure heap is ten times better! but the world turns up its nose at this, and says its too low and vulgar, only fit for the canaille." This pleasantry caused Fleur de Marie to smile, as she continued, "The next morning the Borgnesse gave me the same food for breakfast as she did for supper and then sent me to Montfaucon, to dig for worms; for during the day she kept a shop for fishing-lines, under the Pont Neuf. For a child of seven years, half dead with cold and hunger, it is a long way, I tell you, from the Rue de la Mortellerie to Montfaucon." "The exercise has made you as straight as an arrow; mustn't complain of that," said the Chourineur, striking a light for his pipe. "At length I'd return, almost back-broken, with my basket filled with worms: then, at noon, La Chouette gave me a good piece of bread, and I did not leave a crumb, I assure you." "Not to have eaten would have made your shape like a wasp," said the Chourineur: "mustn't complain of that, my dear" (puffing out volumes of smoke). "But what's the matter, comrade? no, I mean to say Master Rodolphe? you look sad: is it because this girl has lived in misery? hold, we all of us have had enough of it." "Oh! you have never been as miserable and as wretched as I was, Chourineur," said Fleur de Marie.

"I, Goualeuse! you were like a queen compared to me, my dear; when you were young, you had at least straw and bread; while I slept in the plaster-kilns of Clichy, like a vagabond, and refreshed myself with cabbage leaves. I picked from the gutters, but often, when I found it too far to gó the kilns, I slept on the big stones of the Louvre. In winter, I had white sheets, when it snowed."

"Ah! but a man is more hardy than a poor child," said Fleur de Marie; "a poor little child, with no more strength than a bird." "You remember that then?"

"I think so; for when La Chouette struck me, I always fell at the first blow; then she would trample on me, crying, 'This little minx has no more strength than a cat; she can't stand a single cuff;' then she called me La Pegriote—I had no other name—it

was my baptism." "Just like me; I have always been called like a stray dog, whose name is not known, 'Halloo!' 'Thing!' White head. It is quite astonishing how much our stories are alike," said the Chourineur.

"True," cried Fleur de Marie, addressing herself always to this man; seeming to feel a kind of shame in the presence of Rodolphe, to whom she hardly dared to lift her eyes, although he appeared to belong to the class of persons with whom she habitually associated. "And after you brought the worms, what did you then?" asked the Chourineur.

"La Borgnesse sent me to beg in the neighbourhood until night, when she went to sell fritters (a sort of fry) on the Pont Neuf. Marry! at that hour my piece of bread was far enough off; and if I complained of hunger to La Chouette, she'd beat me, saying, 'Go and make your ten sous, Pegriotte, and then you shall have supper;' then, as I was very hungry, and she hurt me, I would cry bitterly. Placing me on the Pont Neuf, with my little stand of barley-sugar, La Borgnesse left me. Oh! how I wept and shivered with cold and hunger!"

"Always just like me, my dear," said the Chourineur, interrupting La Goualeuse; "it can hardly be believed, yet hunger makes one shake as much as cold." "Thus I remained on the Pont Neuf until eleven o'clock at night, always weeping: often the passers-by, seeing me weep, would give me as much as ten, sometimes fifteen sous, which I gave to La Chouette."

"A fine night's work for a little bird!"

"Yes: but the Borgnesse seeing this—"

"With one eye?" said the Chourineur, laughing.

"With one eye, as you say, since she only had one; seeing this, she always took good care to give me a beating before she placed me on the Pont Neuf, that I might excite compassion by my tears, and thus augment my receipts." "That wasn't so stupid!"

"Yes, you think so, Chourineur. I became accustomed to the blows; and, seeing that La Chouette was always enraged when I did not weep, to revenge myself, the more she beat me, the more I laughed; and in the evening, instead of sobbing when I sold my barley-sugar, I sung like a lark, although I hardly had the heart to sing." "But tell me—barley-sugar; had you never any desire to taste them, my poor Goualeuse?"

"Oh, I guess so, Chourineur! but I had never tasted them; it was my great desire. And it was this desire that ruined me; you shall know how. One day, returning home with my worms, some boys beat me, and stole my basket. I returned—I knew what I had to expect: I received my beating, and no bread. At night, the Borgnesse, before we went to the bridge, furious at my conduct the night before, and to put me in the way of weeping, tore my hair out by handfuls, just about the temples, where it is most painful."

"Thunder and lightning! that was too much!" cried the bandit, striking his fist on the table, and knitting his brows; "whip a child, well enough! but to tear out her hair! too much! too much!"

Rodolphe, who had attentively listened to the tale of Fleur de Marie, looked at the Chourineur with astonishment; this burst of sensibility surprised him. "What is the matter, Chourineur?" said he. "What is the matter? what is the matter? how! are you not horrified at this story? that monster of a Chouette, who so ill-treated this poor child? You are, then, as hard-hearted as your fists!" "Continue, my girl," said Rodolphe, without replying to the interpolation of the Chourineur.

"As I told you, La Chouette tortured me to make me weep; it only gave me resolution to make her mad; I began to laugh, and I went off to the bridge with my barley-sugar. La Borgnesse was at her store, and from time to time she shook her fist at me. Then, instead of weeping, I sang louder and louder; but oh! I was very hungry, so hungry! for six months that I had sold barley-sugar, I had never tasted one; but that night, as much to enrage her as for my hunger, I tasted one."

"Bravo! my dear!" "I tasted two." "Bravo! Vive la charte!!!" "Marry! I found it very good, when an orange woman cried out to La Borgnesse, 'I say, La Chouette, look! look! Pegriotte is eating your stock!'"

"Oh, thunder; we are going to have warm work," said the Chourineur, singularly interested. "Poor little mouse, how it must have trembled when La Chouette saw it, eh!"

"How did you get out of the scrape, my poor Goualeuse?" said Rodolphe, as much interested as the Chourineur.

"Ah, marry! that was rather difficult; only what was very droll," added Fleur de Marie, laughing, "was, that La Bour-

gnesse, notwithstanding her rage, could not leave her store; for her fritters were frying famously."

"Ha! ha! ha! true; rather a difficult position," said the Chourineur, shouting with laughter. After having partaken of the hilarity of the bandit, Fleur de Marie continued:—

"In truth! thinking of the blows I should receive, I thought I might as well be whipped for three as for one; so I took a third, and, as La Chouette shook her iron fork at me, as true as you see that plate, I took the barley-sugar and sucked it under her nose." "Bravo! my dear! I can now explain the blow you gave me with your scissors. You are a trump—but La Chouette must have slaughtered you after that." "Her cooking finished, she came to me. I had received three sous for alms, and I had eaten the value of six. When she took me by the hand, I thought I should have fallen to the ground, I was so frightened; I remember it as well as if it were yesterday, for it was just about the holidays. You know there are always shops of toys on the Pont Neuf; all the evening I had glimpses of them: nothing else to do but to look at all the pretty dolls and play-things. You may think for a child—" "Ah! had you ever any toys, Goualeuse?" said the Chourineur. "I—are you foolish? go along! who would have given them to me? However, to proceed, although in the dead of winter, I had nothing on but a miserable, ragged frock of muslin, with neither shoes nor stockings, and sabots on my feet! One was not likely to be smothered in that attire, eh? Well, when La Borgnesse took me by the hand, I became all in a perspiration. That which alarmed me the most was, that, instead of cursing and swearing, La Chouette did nothing but mutter all the way home. She never let go her clutch, but walked so fast that I was obliged to run to keep up with her. In running I lost one of my sabots, and I dared not tell her, so that when we arrived my foot was covered with blood."

"The whelp of a Borgnesse!" cried the Chourineur, in a rage, striking anew on the table. "That gives me a strange sensation, to think of this poor child, running after the old she-devil, with her little bloody foot." "We roosted in a granary of the Rue de la Mortellerie; near the entrance of the alley there was a tavern; La Chouette stepped in, still holding me by the hand, and drank a pint of brandy."

"Morbleu! I could not drink it myself without being as drunk as an owl."

"It was the usual potion of La Borgnesse; thus she always went to bed drunk; on this account, perhaps, she beat me so much; however, we clambered up to our loft; I wasn't at a merry-making, I promise you; La Chouette shut the door, and double locked it: I fell upon my knees, and begged her pardon for having stolen the barley-sugar. She made no answer, but marching up and down the room, muttered between her teeth, 'What shall I do to her to-night—this Pegriotte, this thief of barley-sugar? come, what shall I do to her?' and then she would stop and look at me with her green eye, as I remained always on my knees. Suddenly she went to a shelf, and took thence a pair of pincers—" "Pincers!" cried the Chourineur. "Yes, pincers." "For what use? to strike thee?" said Rodolphe. "To pinch you?" said the Chourineur. "Ah! yes." To tear out your hair?" "Can't you guess! will you give it up?" "Yes, yes." "Well, then, it was to draw out one of my teeth."

The Chourineur uttered such a dreadful imprecation, that all the inmates of the tapis-franc regarded him with astonishment. "Well, what ails you?" said La Goualeuse. "What ails me? why, I'd assassinate her, if I had her! La Borgnesse! Where is she? tell me! where is she? if I find her I'll murder her!" The eyes of the bandit were as red as blood. Rodolphe had partaken of the horror of the Chourineur at the cruelty of the Borgnesse; but he could not help wondering how an assassin could work himself into such a fury, merely at the recital of an old woman's taking out a tooth from a young girl. We believe this sentiment of pity very probable and possible, even in a being however ferocious and wicked. "And she drew out a tooth? this miserable old wretch," said Rodolphe. "I guess so, and not at the first trial either—my God! how she laboured, holding my head between her knees, as in a vice. At length, half with her pincers, and half with her fingers, she succeeded in drawing one of my teeth, which she held up before me, saying, no doubt to frighten me, 'Now take care, Pegriotte, or I'll pull one out every day, and when you have none left, I'll throw you into the river, where the fishes shall eat you, out of revenge for the worms you have furnished to take them.' I remember that, because I thought it unjust—just as if I went to get the worms for my amusement!" "Ah! the hussey! to take

out a tooth from a poor child," said the Chourineur, with renewed rage. "Well, it has come again," said Fleur de Marie, opening her beautiful rosy lips and showing two rows of small teeth, as white as pearls. Was this indifference, forgetfulness, or instinctive generosity, on the part of this young creature? Rodolphe had remarked, that during the whole recital of her wrongs, she had never expressed any feeling of hatred against the atrocious woman who had so cruelly treated her. "Well, what did you do after this? asked the Chourineur. "Faith! I had quite enough; the next day, instead of going after worms, I was away in the direction of the Pantheon. I walked during the whole day—I would have gone to the end of the world rather than fall into the clutches of La Chouette. As I found myself in an unknown quarter, I had met no one from whom I could ask charity, and, besides, I should not have dared to do so. During the night I slept in a wood-yard, under a pile of boards. I was as small as a mouse, and slipping under an old door, I made my nest in a heap of bark. I was almost starved; I tried to chew some shavings, to cheat my hunger, but I could not. I could only bite some birch bark; it was more tender; thereupon I fell asleep; at daylight, hearing a noise, I drew closer under the pile of boards; it was really quite warm, like a cave; if I had had only something to eat, I should not have been as comfortable all the winter." "Just so with me, when in a lime-kiln."

"I did not dare to go out of the board-yard, for I imagined that La Chouette was looking for me to pull out my teeth and throw me to the fishes, and that she would be sure to catch me if I stirred from there."

"Stop; don't speak any more of that old she-wolf—it makes my blood rush to my eyes!"

"To proceed: on the second day, I had eaten again of the birch, and had fallen almost asleep, when I heard the hoarse barking of a dog. I started up and listened; the dog kept barking, and evidently approaching my retreat; fortunately—why, I know not, he dared not come nearer—but you laugh! Chourineur."

"With you, there is always something to laugh about; but never mind, you are a good girl—and, hold! on the faith of a man! I am sorry I struck you."

"Because, if you beat me, I have no one to defend me."

"And I," said Rodolphe.

"You are very kind, Mr. Rodolphe; but the Chourineur did not know that you were there, nor I either."

"Never mind, I hold to what I said. I am sorry I struck you," continued the Chourineur.

"Go on with your story, my child," said Rodolphe.

"I was under the pile of boards when I heard the dog bark; and while he continued to bark I heard a voice say, 'My dog barks; there's some one concealed in the yard—kss! kss! kss! shake him, catch him." The dog sprang upon me, and I, fearing he would bite me, commenced screaming with all my strength. 'Hold,' said the voice; 'that is the cry of a child.' They called off the dog, and brought a lantern. I came out of my hole, and found myself face to face with a great fat man and a boy in a blouse: 'What are you doing in my yard, you little thief?' said the fat man to me, in a savage manner. My good sir, I have not eaten for two days, I have run away from La Chouette, who has pulled out one of my teeth, and wants to throw me to the fishes; not knowing where to sleep, I crept under your gateway; I have slept all night on the shavings under the boards; I meant no harm. Then the wood-merchant said to his boy, 'Oh! I am not to be duped, she is a little thief; she came to steal my logs.'"

"Ah! the old hog! the old beast!" cried the Chourineur. "Steal his logs! and you only eight years old!"

"It was foolish; for his boy answered and said, 'Steal your logs, master? how could she do it? Why she isn't as big as the smallest of your logs.' 'You are right,' said the fat man; but if she don't come on her own account, she has been sent as a spy, to open the door for others—we must take her to the police.'"

"Ah! the pitiful beast of a merchant!"

"I am brought before a magistrate; I am accused of being a vagabond; I am sent to prison; condemned always as a vagabond, to remain, until sixteen years old, in the house of correction. I thank the judges for their kindness. Marry! only think, that in prison I had something to eat; I was never beaten—my God! it was a paradise in comparison with the granary of La Chouette. Besides, in prison I was taught to sew; but here was the misfortune, I was idle and lazy; I preferred to sing rather than work, especially when I saw the sun. Oh! when it was fair and bright in the court of the jail, I could not keep from singing; and then—oh! as I sung I forgot I was a prisoner."

"That is to say, my girl, you are a real nightingale, by birth," said Rodolphe, smiling.

"You are very kind, Mr. Rodolphe; it is since that time they have called me La Goualeuse, instead of Pegriotte. At length I reached my sixteenth year—I came out of prison. Just at the door, I found the Ogresse, and two or three old women, who had sometimes come to see some of the prisoners, and who had always said she would have some work for me, when I should be discharged." "Ah—good! good! I understand," said the Chourineur. "'My dolphin, my angel, little darling,' said the Ogresse and the old women, 'will you come and lodge with us? we will give you fine dresses, and shall have nothing to do but to amuse yourself!' You know well, Chourineur, one could hardly live eight years in prison, without understanding these creatures. I sent them off —I said to myself, 'I know how to sew: I have three hundred francs—I have youth.'"

"And very pretty youth too, my dear," said the Chourineur.

"I said to myself, I have passed eight years in prison, now I mean to enjoy life a little; for that will hurt no one, and I can work when my money is gone; so I danced as long as my money lasted. That was my great fault," added Fleur de Marie, with a sigh; "I ought, first of all, to have procured work, but I had no one to counsel me; in short—what is done, is done. So I spent my money; in the first place, I bought flowers, which I placed all around my chamber; I love flowers so dearly; then I bought a dress, a fine shawl, and then I went to take a ride on a donkey, in the Bois de Boulogne, and at St. Germain's also."

"With a sweetheart, my dear?" asked the Chourineur.

"In truth, no! I wanted to be my own master. I made these excursions with one of my companions, who came from the foundling hospital; a good little girl; she was called Rigolette, because she was always laughing."

"Rigolette? Rigolette? I don't know her," said the Chourineur, meditating.

"Oh, I believe you don't; she is a fine girl, a very good workwoman, and gains at least twenty-five sous a day; she has a nice little room of her own, but I can never visit her more. At length, I had but forty-three francs left."

"You ought to have bought some trinkets with that," said the Chourineur. "Truly, I did better than that. I had for washer-

woman a woman called Lorraine, a good creature; she was *enceinte;* not being able to work longer, she applied for admission into La Bourbe; there was no more room, she was refused, she earned nothing; there she was, without a sous to pay for her lodging. Fortunately, she met by chance, one evening, at the corner of the Pont-Neuf, the wife of Goubin, who had concealed herself for four days in the cellar of a house they were pulling down, at the back of the Hotel Dieu." "And why did Goubin's wife hide in this cellar?" "To escape from her husband, who wished to kill her! She only came out at night to buy some bread; in that manner she met with poor Lorraine, who did not know where to lay her head, expecting every moment her accouchement: seeing this, she took her to her cellar, where she concealed herself. It was, at least, a place of shelter." "Stop stop!" said the Chourineur: "the wife of Goubin is Helmina, is it not?" "Yes; a good soul," answered the Goualeuse. "A seamstress who had worked for me and Rigolette. Marry! she did all she could in giving half of her cellar, her straw, and her bread, to poor Lorraine—in this place the poor little stranger came into the world! ah me! no covering, nothing but straw. Helmina, pitying her destitute condition, came to seek me, in broad day, even at the risk of being murdered, for her husband was seeking her everywhere. She knew I yet had a little money, and that I was not hard-hearted; just at that moment I was stepping in a cabriolet with Rigolette; we were going to the country to finish my forty-three francs. Oh! I do so love the country—the fields, and meadows, and trees. But, ah! when Helmina told me the situation of Lorraine, I sent away the cab, I ran to my chamber, took what linen I had, my blanket, my mattress, put them on the shoulders of a porter, and sent them to the cellar. I followed with Helmina—ah, you should have seen how happy she was! poor Lorraine, we nursed her, Helmina and myself; and, with the aid of money, we got her along, until she was able to go to her washing again. Now she is able to gain her living—but I never can get her to give an account of how much I owe her for washing; however, if she don't give me her bill, I'll change my washerwoman," said La Goualeuse with an important air.

"And Goubin's wife?" said the Chourineur.

"How! Don't you know?"

"No: what is it?" "Ah! the unfortunate Goubin found her

out; some one told him that she was somewhere in the neighbourhood of the Hotel Dieu; and one night, as she came out of the cellar to get some milk for Lorraine, he killed her—three blows of the knife between the shoulders!"

"It is for that, then, that he has been condemned to death, and will be executed in three days?" said the Chourineur. "Exactly," said La Goualeuse. "When you gave all your money to Lorraine, what did you do then, my girl?" said Rodolphe.

"Marry! then I sought for work. I knew how to sew very well, I was of good courage, was not embarrassed, so I went into a linen store of Rue St. Martin. Not to deceive any one, I said I was but two months out of prison, and that I was desirous of getting work; they showed me the door. I asked for work to take home, if it was only a shirt. They laughed at me; so I returned very sad. I met the Ogresse and one of the old women, who were always after me. They took me home, they made me drink brandy, and that's all."

"I understand," said the Chourineur. "I know you just as well now as if I was your father and mother, and you had never left my lap. Well, that's what I call a confession."

"You look sad, my girl," said Rodolphe, "after your story." "The truth is, it makes me feel sad to look back; since my infancy, it is the first time that it has ever happened that I have recalled to my memory all these things at the same time; it is not pleasant, is it, Chourineur?"

"Just so," said he, in an ironical manner; "you regret that you were not a scullion in an eating-house, or servant-maid to some old devils and their imps?" "Never mind; it must be pleasant to be good," said Fleur de Marie, with a sigh.

"Good! oh, the devil!" cried the bandit, with a burst of laughter. "Good! and why not a nun at once, for the honour of your father and mother, whom you never knew?" The face of the young girl lost for a moment its usual expression of indifference. "Stop," said the Chourineur; "I am not a Pleurnicheuse (one who cries). My parents threw me into the street, like a little dog that one has too many. I don't blame them for it, for perhaps they had not enough to eat themselves. But that is no reason for saying, Chourineur, that there are no situations better than mine."

"You! but what do you want? you are as beautiful as Venus;

you are not yet seventeen; you sing like a nightingale; you are called Fleur de Marie, yet you complain. What will you say when you have a stone under your feet, and a chinchilla wig, like the Ogresse?" "I shall never live till that age." "Perhaps you have a patent to prevent your growing old." "No; but I am not strong, and already I have a bad cough." "Ha! good; I already think I see you in a hearse. Go along; you are foolish!"

"Have you these gloomy thoughts often, La Goualeuse?" said Rodolphe. "Sometimes. Listen, Mr. Rodolphe; perhaps *you* can comprehend me; in the morning, when I go to buy my pennyworth of milk from the milkwoman at the corner of the Rue de la Veille-Draperie, and I see her about returning home, with her little horse and waggon, I feel very envious; I say to myself, 'There she goes to the fine country air, to her own house, to her own family, while I return to the den of the Ogresse, dark and gloomy, even at mid-day.'" "Well, well! be honest, my dear; play a farce—be honest!" said the Chourineur.

"Honest! my God! and how would you have me be honest? The clothes I wear belong to the Ogresse; I owe her for my board and lodging. I dare not stir from here. She would have me arrested. I belong to her. *I must pay my debt.*" As she pronounced these horrible words, the unfortunate creature shuddered.

"Then remain as you are, and think no more of a country life," said the Chourineur. "Are you a fool? Only think how you will shine in the cité, while the milkwoman makes a pottage for her children, milks her cows, collects herbs for her rabbits, and gets a blow from her husband when he comes from the tavern."

"Some drink, Chourineur," said Fleur de Marie, hastily, after a short silence, as she held out her glass. "No, no; not wine—brandy; it is stronger," said she, in her sweet voice, as she put back the jug of wine the Chourineur held to her glass.

"Brandy, good; ah! now I love you, my dear; you are a madcap!" said this man, not understanding the movement of the young girl, and without remarking a tear which stood trembling in the soft eyes of La Goualeuse.

"It is a pity that brandy is so disagreeable to drink, for it hardens one so," said Fleur de Marie, placing her glass on the table, after having drank with as much repugnance as disgust.

Rodolphe had listened to this artless narrative with a growing interest. Misery and poverty, but not crime, had been the ruin of this poor young girl.

CHAPTER IV.

HISTORY OF THE CHOURINEUR.

The reader has not forgotten that two of the guests of the tapis-franc were attentively watched by a third person, whose arrival we have recorded. One of these two men, we have remarked, wore a Greek cap, and kept his hand concealed, and had asked the Ogresse if the Maitre d'Ecole had not yet come.

During the story of the Goualeuse, which they could not hear, these two men had conversed in a low tone, regarding the door from time to time with great anxiety. He who wore the Greek cap said to his companion, "The Maitre d'Ecole does not come; I hope that the comrade may not have been assassinated, to steal his part of the booty." "That would be flaming for us who arranged the burglary," said the other.

The new-comer, who was seated at too great a distance to hear what these men said, after having consulted a paper which he held concealed in his cap, appeared to be satisfied with the result, for he came from the table, and said to the Ogresse, who was nodding at her counter, with her feet on the stove, and her black cat on her knees, "I say, Mother Ponisse, just keep an eye on my glass and plate. I'll be back in a moment; and one must look after freebooters." "Be easy, my good man," said Mother Ponisse; "If your plate and glass are empty, no one will touch them." The man laughed at the pleasantry of the Ogresse, and disappeared without any one noticing his departure.

As the door opened when the man went out, Rodolphe perceived in the street the coalman of whom we have spoken; and before the door was closed, he had time to make an impatient gesture, to show how much he was annoyed at being thus watched; but this latter paid no attention to the contrariety of Rodolphe, and did not quit the precincts of the tapis-franc.

Notwithstanding the glass of brandy she had taken, La Goualeuse did not recover her gaiety: under its influence, her expression, on the contrary, became more sad: her back against

the wall, her head hanging on her breast, her large blue eyes gazing vacantly around, the unfortunate creature seemed overwhelmed with the most gloomy thoughts. Two or three times, seeing the fixed regards of Rodolphe, she had turned away in confusion, and could not account for the impression caused by this unknown. Restrained, oppressed by his presence, she reproached herself, for not showing more gratitude to one who had saved her from the Chourineur; she almost regretted having so plainly related her life. The Chourineur, on the contrary, was very gay; he alone devoured the *harlequin*. The wine and brandy had made him very talkative; the shame of having found his master, as he said, was effaced by the generous treatment of Rodolphe; and, besides, he acknowledged such a vast physical superiority, that his humiliation gave way to a mixed sentiment of admiration, fear, and respect.

This entire absence of revenge, the savage frankness with which he had acknowledged that he killed, and had been justly punished, the ferocious pride with which he had denied that he had ever stolen, proved at least that, notwithstanding his crimes, the Chourineur was not completely callous: this had not escaped the observation of Rodolphe, and he waited, somewhat curious to hear his story. The ambition of man is so insatiable, so bizarre in its pretensions, that Rodolphe actually wished for the arrival of the Maitre d'Ecole, that terrible brigand, whose throne he had almost overturned. To allay his impatience, he requested the Chourineur to go on with his story. "Come, my man," said he to him, "we listen." The Chourineur emptied his glass, and thus began:—

"You, my poor Goualeuse, you have at least been taken care of by La Chouette, whom the devil confound. You have had at least a shelter until you were sent to prison as a vagabond. I cannot remember ever to have slept in what you call a bed, before I was nineteen, fine age, when I became a trooper." "You have been in the service, Chourineur?" said Rodolphe. "Three years; but we will come to that presently. The pavement of the Louvre, the plaster kilns of Clichy, and the quarries of Montrouge, these were the hotels of my youth—you see I had town house and country house." "Ha, ha! what trade did you follow?" "In truth, my master! I have an indistinct recollection of having lived with an old *Chiffonier*, who knocked me down with his iron hook: this must be so, for I never meet one of

these Cupids, with their rag baskets, that I do not feel the greatest desire to pounce on them; proof enough that they beat me when I was a child. My first occupation was to help the horse-killers cut the throats of horses at Montfaucon. I was about ten or twelve years old when I first began to kill the poor beasts. At first I felt badly, but at the end of a month that was all gone; aud then, on the contrary, I liked the business. There was no one who had such sharp knives as I had, so I was always in demand. After I had cut the throats of the beasts, they threw me a piece of the rump of a horse, which had died from some complaint, for my pay; for those which we killed were sold to the 'fricoteurs' of the quarter of the Ecole de Medicine, who made beef, lamb, veal, or game of it, just to suit any one's taste. Ah! when I got my piece of horseflesh, the King was not my master; I flew to my kiln, like a wolf to his den, and there, with the permission of the lime burners, I roasted my meat on the coals. When the workmen were not there, I went and gathered some sticks at Romainville, struck fire, and made my roast by the walls of the slaughter-house. Oh! it was raw and bloody: but for all that, I did not eat the less." "And your name? what did they call you?" said Rodolphe.

"My hair was still more of the colour of flax then than it is now, and the blood was always rushing to my eyes; on that account they called me Albino—(the albinoes are the white rabbits—lupin-blanc—among men, and they have red eyes)," added the Chourineur gravely, speaking by way of physiological parenthesis. "And your parents? your family?" "My family? Oh! they lodged at the same number as those of La Goualeuse. The place of my birth? The first corner of no matter what street, the curbstone at the right or left as you go down to the gutter." "You cursed your father and mother, then, for having abandoned you?" "Oh! that would have done me a great deal of good. However, they did play a poor farce in bringing me into the world. I would not complain, if I had been made as the great God ought to make poor folks; that is to say, without feeling hunger and thirst; then it would not cost them so much to be honest." "You have been hungry and cold, and yet you have not stolen, Chourineur?" "No, no; yet I have seen much misery—much misery. I have fasted sometimes more than two days, more than my turn; but! I have never stolen." "For

fear of the prison?" "Oh! what a farce!" said the Chourineur. "I would not then have stolen bread for fear of getting bread! Honest, I was starving. Thief, they would have fed me in prison. No! no! I did not steal, because—because—because it is not in my nature to steal." This truly great answer, of which Chourineur himself did not comprehend the bearing, profoundly astonished Rodolphe. He felt that a poor wretch who could thus remain honest amidst the most cruel privations, was doubly to be respected, since the punishment of the crime would have offered him a certain refuge; and he extended his hand to this unfortunate, whom misery had not completely lost. The Chourineur regarded him with astonishment and respect; hardly dared he to touch the hand offered to him; he felt that between the two there was an impenetrable abyss.

"Well, well," said Rodolphe, "you have yet a heart and honour."

"Truly! I know nothing about it," said the Chourineur, much affected; "what do you say? now see—I never felt so before; what is sure is this: no matter, for the blows of the fist, which you might have repeated until to-morrow; instead of which you give me to eat and drink, and say such things to me—no matter, in life or death I am yours; you can always count on the Chourineur."

Rodolphe answered coldly, not wishing him to see his emotion: "And did you a long time remain a horse-killer?" "I guess so. At first it made me sick to kill the poor creatures; afterwards it amused me; but when I became sixteen it became a rage, a perfect passion to cut their throats. I forgot to eat and drink—I only thought of that. You ought to have seen me in the midst of my work—except an old cotton pantaloon, I was entirely naked—when, with my knife, well sharpened, in my hand, I had around me (I don't magnify) from fifteen to twenty horses all waiting for their turn. Thunder! when I began to cut their throats, I don't know what got into me; it was like madness: I had a buzzing in my ears—my head went round—the blood was in my eyes, and I saw all red; and I stabbed, until the knife would fall from my hands. Thunder! it was an enjoyment! If I had been a millionaire I would have paid to work at that trade."

"It was this, then, that gave you the habit?" said Rodolphe to the Chourineur. "Yes, that may be; but when I was sixteen this madness became so strong, that one day, while I was at work, I

became crazy, and I spoiled my work. Yes! I injured the skins, by sticking in the knife to the right and left; so they put me out of doors. Then I wished to get employment among the butchers; they turned up their noses, as a bootmaker does at a cobbler. Seeing this, and my rage passing away with my sixteenth year, I began to look for my bread in another manner. I did not find it very soon, and then I fasted. Finally, I got employment in the quarries of Mont Rouge; but, at the end of two years, I was almost used up in playing the squirrel in the large wheel by which we drew up the stones, at twenty sous a day. I was tall and strong, and I enlisted in a regiment; they asked me my name, my age, and for my papers. My name? Albino; my age? see my beard; my papers? here is the certificate of my master quarry-man. As I made a first-rate grenadier, I was enrolled."

"With your strength, your courage, and your mania to cut throats, if there had been a war in those times, you might have become an officer," said Rodolphe. "To whom do you say it? To 'Chouriner' an Englishman or a Prussian would have given a different kind of pleasure than to 'Chouriner' an old horse. But there was the difficulty; there was no war, and there was no discipline. An apprentice may fetch a blow to his master very well: if he is the weakest, he takes it; if he is the strongest, he gives it; they turn him out of doors, or send him to jail—nothing more. But in the service it is quite another thing. One day my sergeant gave me a blow, to make me obey more quickly; that made me mad, and I kicked him; he pushed and I pushed; he took me by the throat, and I gave him a blow with my fist, They fell upon me: then my madness took possession of me, my blood flew to my eyes, and I saw red. I had my knife in my hand, for I was in the kitchen, and—I began to 'chouriner' as at the slaughter-house. I killed the serjeant, I wounded two soldiers; real butchery! eleven blows of the knife to the three—yes, eleven—blood—blood as in the slaughter-house!"

The brigand let his head fall on his breast, and remained for some time with a fixed and haggard look. "What are you thinking about, Chourineur?" asked Rodolphe, with an air of interest.

"Nothing, nothing," he answered, roughly, and then went on with his usual indifference. "I was seized, judged, and condemned to death." "You escaped?" "No; no, but I was sent

for fifteen years to the galleys instead of being executed. I had forgotten to tell you, that while I belonged to the regiment, we were in garrison at Melun, where I saved two comrades from drowning in the Marne. Another time, being in garrison at Rouen, a fire broke out among houses all of wood; it burned like a box of matches. I belonged to the fire service; we arrived at the fire; they told me that there was an old woman who could not get out, and would be burned. I ran thither. Thunder! how hot it was! It made me remember the lime-kiln of my early days; finally, I saved the old creature. My lawyer twisted his tongue so much, and made such a talk, that my punishment was changed, so that, instead of going to the scaffold, I had fifteen years at the galleys. When I found that I should not be killed, my first idea was to jump at the throat of my advocate, and choke him! Can you understand that, my master?"

"Did you regret that your sentence was commuted?" "Yes, to those who play with a knife, let the knife be given; it is just. To those who steal, irons on the legs. Each one his lot; but to make a man live after he has assassinated? hold! The judges don't know what an effect that has at first."

"You have felt remorse, then, Chourineur?"

"Remorse! no; for I served my time. But formerly there was hardly a night that I did not see the sergeant and soldier whom I killed pass before me in a kind of night-mare: that is to say, not alone, not one, two, or three, but by tens, hundreds, thousands, waiting their turn in a kind of slaughter-house. Then I would see red, and begin to 'chouriner' these men, like the horses formerly; but the more I stabbed the soldiers, the more they came back, and in dying they looked at me with eyes so soft, that I cursed myself for killing them: but I could not stop myself. And this was not all. I never had a brother, and yet it seemed that all these people that I assassinated were my brothers—brothers whom I could have gone through fire to save. At length, when I could stand it no longer, I awoke, drenched with a cold sweat, as cold as frozen snow."

"That was an ugly dream, Chourineur?" "Oh! yes. Well, when I first went to the galleys, every night I had it—that dream! It was enough to make one mad, so I tried to kill myself; once by swallowing verdegris, and another time I tried to hang myself in my chains. But I am as strong as a bull: the verdegris made

me thirsty, that's all; and as for the chain which I passed round my neck, that only made a mark, a sort of natural blue cravat. After that, the habit of living conquered; my nightmare became more rare, and I did just as every one else did."

"You were in a good school to learn to steal."

"Yes; but it wasn't to my taste. The other criminals laughed at me, but I beat them with my chain. That is the way I became acquainted with the brigand. As for him, look out for fists! He gave me my pay just like you gave me yours a short time since."

"He is, then, a liberated criminal?" "No; he was condemned for life, but he made his escape." "He escaped? and yet he is not denounced?" "It is not I who will denounce him; besides, that would look as if I was afraid of him." "But how comes it that the police can't find him? Haven't they a description of his person?" "Oh, yes! but it is a long time since; he has so altered his appearance, that hardly the devil himself would know him." "In what manner has he done it?" "He began by cutting off a piece of his nose, which was half a yard long; and then he washed his face in vitriol." "If he comes to-night you will see; he had a large nose like a parrot; now it is as flat as your hand: his lips are as large as your fist, and his olive face as much seamed as a beggar's coat." "And now he is so altered that he cannot be recognised?" "It is six months since he escaped from Rochfort, and the officers have met him a hundred times without knowing him." "Why was he sent to the galleys?" "For counterfeiting, robbery, and assassination. They call him schoolmaster, because he writes a superb hand, and is quite learned." "Is he very much feared?" "He will be so no longer, when you have rinsed him as you have rinsed me. Thunder! I am very curious to see that." "What does he for a living?" "They say that he boasts of having killed and rifled a cattle merchant, about three weeks since, on the Poissy road." "He will, sooner or later, be arrested." "It will take more than two to do that, for he always carries, concealed under his blouse, two loaded pistols and a poniard; he will never be cut down but once. He will kill any one and every one to escape; he does not conceal it; and as he is twice as strong as you and me, they had better let him alone." "When you left the galleys, what did you do then, Chourineur?" "I went and offered my services to the Master

workman at the Quai St. Paul, where I earn my living." "But, since you are not a robber, why do you live in the city?" "Where would you have me live? Who wants to associate with a criminal? And since it is very tiresome to be alone, and I like company, I come here to associate with my fellows. They fear me like the devil in the city, and the officers have nothing to say to me, except sometimes I am sent to the jug for twenty-four hours, for assault and battery." "How much do you earn each day?" "Thirty-five sous; that I'll do as long as I have arms. When my strength is gone, I'll take a hook and a basket, like the old rag man that I recollect in my childhood." "So, with all this, you are not unhappy?" "There are many worse off than I am, certainly; and if it were not for my dreams of the serjeant and the soldiers, dreams which I still have, I could die tranquilly at the corner of the street, or in the hospital; but this dream—hold—I don't like to think about it," said the Chourineur, and he struck the ashes from his pipe on the corner of the table. The Goualeuse had listened to the story with an absent air; she seemed plunged in a painful reverie. Rodolphe himself remained thoughtful; the two stories he had just heard had awakened new ideas; but a tragical incident recalled to his mind in what place he was.

CHAPTER V.

AN ARREST.

The man who went out for a moment, after having requested the Ogresse to look after his plate and cup, now returned, accompanied by another person, with broad shoulders and powerful frame. He said to him, "A lucky chance to meet you in this way, Borel. Come in, and take a glass."

The Chourineur whispered to Rodolphe, pointing to the newcomer, "There is going to be a storm: he is a constable: look out! The two bandits of whom we have spoken exchanged a rapid glance, raised themselves simultaneously from the table, and made a rush for the door; the two agents sprang on them, making a peculiar cry. A terrible conflict ensued; but the door of the tavern opened, and other officers entered, and outside could be seen a troop of gendarmes. Profiting by the tumult, the coalman advanced in the doorway, and, catching a look from

Rodolphe, he placed on his lips the fore-finger of his right hand. Rodolphe, with a rapid and imperious gesture, commanded him to retire, and then turned to observe what was passing before him. The man with the Greek cap uttered cries of rage; half extended on the table, three men could hardly restrain him. Annihilated, melancholy, with livid face, blanched lips, the lower jaw fallen, and convulsively agitated; his companion made no resistance, but held out his hands to be manacled.

The Ogresse, accustomed to such scenes, remained seated in her bar, with her hands in the pockets of her apron. "What have these men been doing, my good Mr. Borel?" she asked one of the officers whom she knew. "They have murdered an old woman who lived in the Rue St. Christophe, that they might rob her house. Before she died, the poor creature said she had bitten one of them in the hand. We have had our eye upon these scoundrels, and my comrade was here a little while since, to be assured of their identity: now we've nabbed them." "Fortunately they paid for their liquor in advance," said the Ogresse. "Won't you take something, Mr. Borel? a glass of perfect love? or some cordial?"

"Thank you, Mother Ponisse; I must take care of these brigands; there's one of them kicking yet." In effect, one of them began to struggle again; and when they were about to lead him to the truck which stood at the door, he resisted so violently that they were obliged to carry him. His accomplice, seized with a nervous shuddering, could hardly support himself; his violet lips shook as if he were speaking, and they were obliged to cast him into the vehicle more dead than alive.

"Ah! look here, Mother Ponisse!" said one of the officers; "you had better look out for Bras-Rouge; he is mischievous, and may compromise you." "Bras-Rouge! oh, he hasn't been in this quarter for weeks, Mr. Borel." "Oh! he is always after something when he is not seen; you know that well enough; but don't you receive any package from him on deposit, or in any other manner, that would be—"? "Oh, be quite easy, Mr. Borel; I am as afraid of Bras-Rouge as I am of the devil. No one knows where he comes from, or whither he goes. The last time I saw him, he told me he had just come from Germany." "Very well; I warn you; pay attention."

Before quitting the tapis-franc, the agent cast a scrutinizing glance on the other drinkers, and then said to the Chourineur, in

a tone almost affectionate, "Ah, here you are, wicked one! It is a long time since I have heard of you: have you no more fights? have you become a good boy?" "Good as an image, Mr. Borel; you know I only break the heads of those who request it; but, nevertheless, here is my master," said the Chourineur, placing his hand on the shoulder of Rodolphe. "Hold! I don't know him," said the agent, looking at Rodolphe. "And we will not make acquaintance," said the latter.

"I hope not, on your account, my boy," said the agent; and then addressing himself to the Ogresse, "Good night, Mother Ponisse: your tapis-franc is like a real mousetrap: this is the third assassin I have caught in it." "I really hope it will not be the last, Mr. Borel; it is very much at your service," said the Ogresse graciously, making a profound reverence.

After the departure of the police agent, the young man who was smoking and drinking brandy, refilled his pipe, and said to the Chourineur, in a hoarse voice, "Don't you recognise the Greek cap? Why, it is the man Velu. When I saw the agent come in, I thought something was the matter, as he kept his hand always concealed under the table." "It is quite lucky for the Brigand that he wasn't here," said the Ogresse. "The Greek cap asked for him several times; he said they had business together. But I don't eat my customers; don't bite off my own head. When they are arrested, good—every one to his trade—but I don't sell them. Hold! when one speaks of the wolf, you see his tail," added the Ogresse, at the moment that a man and woman entered the tavern: "here are the Brigand and his wife." A sort of shuddering appeared to spread among the guests of the tapis-franc: and Rodolphe himself, notwithstanding his natural intrepidity, could not repress a slight emotion at the sight of this redoubtable fellow, whom he regarded, for some moments, with a curiosity mixed with horror.

The Chourineur had told the truth, for he had horribly mutilated himself. It is impossible to imagine anything more frightful than the visage of this brigand. His face was furrowed in every direction with deep livid scars; the corrosive action of the vitriol had swollen his lips: the cartilage of the nose having been cut, two immense holes replaced the nostrils; his clear grey eyes, very small and very round, sparkled with ferocity; his forehead, flat, like that of a tiger, was half covered by a cap

of long, red fur; it might have been called the monster's mane. He was not less than six feet two or three inches in height; his head, too large for his body, was sunk down between his immense shoulders: he had long, muscular arms, with short, fat hands, hairy even to the ends of his fingers: his legs were short and slightly bent, but the enormous calves announced a force athletic. As for the expression of ferocity which shone out of this hideous mask—the restless, suspicious, burning looks, like those of a savage beast—we cannot describe them. The woman who accompanied him was old; she was decently clad in a red and black tartan plaid, and wore a white hat. Rodolphe, seeing her profile, her green and round eye, her crooked nose, her thin lips, her extending chin, her wicked and cunning physiognomy, thought of the description of La Chouette. He was about to mention this to La Goualeuse, when he saw her suddenly turn pale: she seemed to look with intense interest at the companion of the Brigand. At length, seizing the arm of Rodolphe with a trembling hand, she said to him, in a low voice, "La Chouette—my God! La Borgnesse!" At this moment the Brigand, exchanging some words in a low tone with one of the frequenters of the tapis-franc, advanced slowly to the table where Rodolphe was seated with La Goualeuse and the Chourineur, and, addressing Fleur de Marie in a deep hoarse voice, like the growlings of a tiger, said, "Ah, now, my belle blonde, you must leave these two jockeys and come with me." The Goualeuse made no answer, but moved closer to Rodolphe; her teeth were chattering with fear. "As for me, I shall not be jealous," said the horrible Chouette, laughing. She had not yet recognised in La Goualeuse the poor little "Pegriotte," her victim.

"Ah! ah! now, don't you understand me?" said the monster, advancing. "If you don't come, I'll pull out one of your eyes, and make you look like La Chouette; as for you, moustache," addressing Rodolphe, "if you don't throw me that little blonde over the table, I'll tear—" "My God! defend me!" cried La Goualeuse to Rodolphe, joining her hands; then, reflecting that perhaps she was going to expose him to great danger, she said to him in a low voice, "No, no, don't stir, Mr. Rodolphe; if he approaches, I'll cry for help; and, for fear of a noise that will attract the police, the Ogresse will take my part." "Be tranquil, my girl," said Rodolphe, looking boldly at the Brigand: "you

are at my side; you shall not stir; and as that hideous animal there makes you sick as well as myself, I am going to throw him into the street." "You!" said the Brigand. "I!" answered Rodolphe; and, notwithstanding the efforts of La Goualeuse, he rose from the table. The Brigand retreated one step at the terrible aspect of the physiognomy of Rodolphe. Fleur de Marie and the Chourineur were also struck by the wicked and hardened expression of diabolical rage which at this moment contracted the noble traits of their companion; he became unrecognizable. In his contest with the Chourineur he had shewn his contempt and scorn; but, face to face with the Brigand, he seemed possessed with a hatred the most ferocious; the pupils of his eyes, strongly dilated, sparkled with a most savage vivacity. Certain expressions have an irresistible magnetic power, which terrifies those under their influence, and which they cannot avoid. Rodolphe was endowed with this faculty, and the Brigand, trembling, made another retreating step; he no longer seemed to rely on his vaunted strength, but sought, under his blouse, for the handle of his poniard. A bloody murder might thus have stained the floor of the tapis-franc, if La Chouette had not seized him by the arm, saying, "Stop! assassin, let me say a word. You shall eat those two cocks by-and-by—they shan't escape." For some time La Chouette had been regarding Fleur de Marie with attention; she appeared as if endeavouring to recall something to her recollection. At length she no longer had any doubt; she had recognised La Goualeuse. "Is it possible?" said La Borgnesse, clasping her hands with astonishment; "this is La Pegriotte, the thief of my barley-sugar; where in the world do you come from? does the devil send you here?" added she, shaking her fist at the young girl. "Ah! you shall come again under my clutches; don't be afraid, I shan't pull any more teeth, but I'll draw every tear out of you. Ah! does that alarm you? You don't know, then, that I have found out your parents? The Brigand saw, at the galleys, the man who gave you to me when you were a child. He told him the name of your mother. Oh! they are rich people."

"My parents! You know them?" cried Fleur de Marie. "Yes! my man knows the name of your mother, but I'll tear out his tongue before he shall tell you! Why, it was only yesterday that he saw the man who brought you to me, because they would

The Schoolmaster threatening Roderick.

not pay his wife any more, who had nursed you. Your mother cared no more about you—she would like to have heard that you were dead, be assured. But, no matter, if you knew her name you could make her pay nicely. The man I spoke of has papers —yes, Pegriotte, he has letters from your mother, of which he can make no use, because he has his own reasons. Ha! you cry, Pegriotte. Well, no! you shall not know your mother!" "I would rather she should think me dead," said Fleur de Marie, wiping her eyes.

Rodolphe, forgetting the Brigand, had attentivly listened to the recital of La Chouette, and appeared much interested. During this time, the Brigand, being no longer under the influence of the eye of Rodolphe, had taken courage; he could not imagine, that this young man, of so slight a frame, could stand against him; sure of his own Herculean strength, he drew nearer to the defender of La Goualeuse, and said to La Chouette, in an authoritative manner, "Enough of this talk. I want to spoil the beauty of this jockey, and pick out his feathers; so that 'la belle blonde' will find me more gentle than he is." With one bound, Rodolphe jumped on the table. "Take care of my plates!" said the Ogresse. The Brigand put himself into an attitude of defence, but at the moment that Rodolphe was about to jump at him, the door of the tapis-franc was opened violently; the coalman rushed into the room, pushed the Brigand rudely on one side, and approaching Rodolphe, whispered in English, "My lord, Tom and Sarah—they are at the end of the street." At these mysterious words, Rodolphe made an angry movement, cast a Louis on the counter of the Ogresse, and ran towards the door. The Brigand endeavoured to obstruct the passage, but the latter turned for a moment, and gave him two such blows with his fist, that the bully staggered, and fell heavily across one of the tables. "Vive la Charte! there I recognise some of my blows at the end," cried the Chourineur. "One or two more lessons like that, and I will know how to give them." Coming to himself after a few seconds, the Brigand started in pursuit of Rodolphe, who had disappeared with the coalman among the dark labyrinths of the city; it was impossible to rejoin them. At the moment he re-entered, foaming with rage, two men, running from the side opposite to that by which Rodolphe had disappeared, rushed into the tapis-franc cut of breath, as if they had been running a race. Their first

movement was to look closely round the tavern. "How unfortunate!" said one: "he has escaped us again!" "Patience! the days have twenty-four hours, and life is long," answered the other. These new-comers spoke in English.

CHAPTER VI.

TOM AND SARAH.

THE two persons who had just entered the tapis-franc evidently belonged to a class much more elevated than the usual frequenters of this tavern. The one, tall and thin, had hair almost white, while his eyebrows and whiskers were quite black; a bony and dark face, and a severe and hardened aspect. His black hat was tied around with crape, his long black riding coat was buttoned to his throat, and he wore over his pantaloons of grey cloth large military boots, formerly called "Suwarrows." His companion, of very small stature, was also dressed in mourning, and was pale and handsome. His long black hair and eyelashes, and his brilliant dark eyes, made a striking contrast to the whiteness of his complexion: by the carriage, size, and the delicacy of features, it was easy to be perceived that this was a woman disguised. "Tom, ask for something to drink, and question these people about him," said Sarah. "Yes!" answered he, seating himself at one of the tables, while Sarah wiped her forehead; and then speaking to the Ogresse, in good French, almost without accent, he said, "Madam, give us something to drink, if you please."

The entrance of these individuals had excited a lively attention; their dress, their manners, indicated they were no frequenters of such taverns, while their restless, busy movements, onnounced that no common business had brought them in that quarter. The Chourineur, the Brigand, and La Chouette regarded them with great curiosity. The Goualeuse, alarmed at her encounter with La Borgnesse, and fearing the threats of the Brigand, had profited by the innattention of the two wretches, and slipped out by the half-open door, which led to the street. The Chourineur and Brigand, in their respective positions, had no interest in renewing the quarrel; surprised at the appearance of these people, the Ogresse partook of the general curiosity. Tom said to her a

second time, rather impatiently, "Madam, we have asked for some drink; have the goodness to serve us." Mother Ponisse, flattered by this courtesy, came and leaned graciously on the table, and said, "Will you have some wine on draught, or will you have a sealed bottle?" "Give us a bottle of wine, some glasses, and water." It was brought by the Ogresse. Tom threw her five francs, and refused the change. "Keep that, landlady, and take a glass of wine with us." "You are very polite, sir," said Mother Ponisse, looking at Tom with more astonishment than gratitude. "But tell me," continued he; "we have agreed to meet one of our comrades at a tavern in this street; perhaps we are mistaken in the place." "This is the 'Lapin-Blanc,' at your service, sir." "That's the name" said Tom, making a sign to Sarah. "Oh yes! it was at the 'Lapin-Blanc' we were to wait."

"I guess there are not two 'Lapin-Blancs' in this street," said the Ogresse, proudly; "but what kind of a man was your comrade?" "Tall and slender, hair and moustache bright chestnut," said Tom. "Hold! he was here just now—a coalman came to seek him, and they went away together." "It is they," said Tom. "And were they alone here?" asked Sarah. "That is to say, the coalman only came for a moment; your comrade supped here with La Goualeuse and the Chourineur," said the Ogresse, as she looked towards the Chourineur, the only remaining companion of Rodolphe. Tom and Sarah turned towards the Chourineur, and after a few moments examination, Sarah said to Tom, "Do you know this man?" "No; Karl lost sight of Rodolphe at the entrance of those alleys; seeing Murphy, disguised as a coalman, hovering around this tavern, and peeping through the windows, he suspected something, and came and advised me."

During this conversation, in a low tone of voice, and in a strange tongue, the Brigand said to La Chouette, in a whisper, looking at Tom and Sarah, "The tall, thin fellow, gave five francs to the Ogresse; it is almost midnight; it blows and rains like the devil; when they go out I'll stun the big one, and take his money: he has a woman with him; he won't dare make a noise." "If she cries, I have my vitriol in my pocket, and I'll break the bottle on her face," said the Borgnesse; "you must always give something to children when they cry." Then she added, "Say now, 'Fourline,' the first time we meet with Pegriotte, we must take her by authority; when I once have her, we'll wash her muzzle

with my vitriol; that will prevent her from being so proud with her fine beau." "Stop! La Chouette, it will end by my marrying you," said the brigand; "your match for address and courage is not to be found: that night with the beef-merchant—I watched you: I said to myself, there is my wife! she works better than a man." After having reflected for a moment, Sarah said to Tom, looking at the Chourineur, "If we interrogate this man about Rodolphe, we can perhaps find out what brought him here?" "We will try," said Tom; and addressing the Chourineur, "Comrade," said he, "we expected to meet a friend here; he has supped with you: can you tell us where he has gone to?" "I only know him, because he rinsed me two hours ago, in defending La Goualeuse."

"And you never saw him before?" "Never! we met in the alley of the house of Bras-Rogue."

"Landlady, another bottle, if you please, and of the best!" said Tom. Sarah and he had hardly wet their lips; while Mother Ponisse, to do honour, no doubt, to her own cellar, had several times emptied her glass. "You will serve us at the table of this gentleman, if he will permit," added Tom, as he and Sarah took a seat alongside of the Chourineur, as much astonished as flattered at this politeness. The brigand and La Chouette still kept whispering about their sinister project. The fresh bottle served, and Tom and Sarah seated at the table with the Chourineur and the Ogresse, the conversation continued: "You said, then, brave fellow, that you met our comrade Rodolphe in the house of Bras-Rouge!" said Tom, touching glasses with the Chourineur. "Yes!" answered he, slowly emptying his glass. "Now that's a singular name—Bras-Rouge! who is Bras-Rouge?" "He is a smuggler," said the Chourineur, negligently: "capital wine, Mother Ponisse!"

"On that account, you shouldn't leave your tumbler empty," said Tom, filling his glass. "To your good health," said he, "and to that of your little friend—who—enough—if my aunt was a man, she'd be my uncle, as the proverb says." "Go along farceur! I understand."

Sarah blushed imperceptibly. Tom continued: "I did not understand what you said about Bras-Rouge! Rodolphe came out of his house, doubtless!" "I told you that Bras-Rouge was a smuggler." Tom looked at the Chourineur with surprise. "And I say it without betraying him, for he does not conceal it, but

boasts of it under the very noses of the officers. However, look for him, and catch him if you can." "Bras-Rouge is an evil spirit; take care!" "And what did Rodolphe want with this man?" asked Sarah. "Faith, I know nothing about it. This evening, I wanted to beat La Goualeuse: I was wrong, for she is a good girl; she hid herself in the alley of Bras-Rouge's house. I pursued her: it was dark as the devil; and instead of falling upon La Goualeuse, I ran against the fists of Master Rodolphe, who gave me my pay in his own coin. Oh yes! well strung up! he has promised to show me the art of boxing."

"Bras-Rouge? forsooth! he sells everything that is forbidden to be sold, and does everything that is forbidden to be done: that's his occupation, an't it, Mother Ponisse?" "Oh! he is sharp as a needle," said the Ogresse.

"And he does cheat the custom-house officers finely," answered the Chourineur? "They have pounced more than twenty times into his den, but they never found anything; and, notwithstanding, he often comes out with his little packages."

"It is malicious!" said the Ogresse. "They say there is a secret passage in his house which leads to the catacombs." "And what is the number of the house?"

"No. 13, Rue aux Feves: Bras-Rouge—any sort of a merchant—well known in the city," said the Chourineur. "I will write his name and address in my note-book. If we cannot find Rodolphe, we will endeavour to get some information concerning him from Bras-Rouge," said Tom, writing, as he spoke, in his memorandum-book. "Well, you may pride yourself on having in Mr. Rodolphe a good friend," said the Chourineur. "Yes, a good fellow; if it had not been for the coalman, he was just about combing the hair of the Brigand, whom you see in the corner there with La Chouette. Thunder! I ought to be bound hand and foot, to keep me from exterminating her, the old she-wolf, when I think of what she did to La Goualeuse; but, patience! a blow of the fist is never lost."

"Rodolphe has beaten you? You must hate him," said Sarah. "I hate a man who acted as he did, almost always! Yes, it is droll. Hold! there is the Brigand, who has beaten me, and I should rejoice to see him strangled. Mr. Rodolphe has beaten me—even harder; but it is just the contrary—I only wish him well. I believe I would go through fire to save him, and yet I never saw

him before to-night." "You say that, because we are his friends." "No, thunder! no, on the faith of a man. Do you see, he makes the finest blows with his fists; and he prides himself on it no more than a child. There's no use talking—he is a finished master; and when he talks to you so—says such words, that makes your heart jump into your throat; and then, when he looks at you—such a look—hold! I have been a trooper—with such a commander—do you see—one would eat the moon and the stars."

Tom and Sarah looked at each other in silence.

"This incredible power of domination will follow him, then, everywhere, and for ever," said Sarah, bitterly.

"Yes; until we break the charm," answered Tom.

"Yes: and whatever may happen, it must be," said Sarah, passing her hand over her face, as if to conceal some painful emotion.

Midnight struck at the Hotel de Ville, and the light of the tavern shed a doubtful light. With the exception of the Chourineur and his two companions, the Brigand and La Chouette, all the frequenters of the tapis-franc had one by one retired. The Brigand whispered to La Chouette, "Let us go and hide ourselves in the alley opposite: we shall see when our friends come out, and can follow them. If they go to the left, we will wait for them at the corner of the Rue St. Eloi: if they turn to the right, we will wait for them at the ruins, near the triperie: there is a large hole there, I have an idea." So saying, they advanced towards the door. "You don't take anything to-night?" said the Ogresse. "No, Mother Ponisse, we only came in for shelter," said he, as he went out with La Chouette.

CHAPTER VII.

YOUR PURSE OR YOUR LIFE.

At the noise made by the door in closing, Tom and Sarah aroused themselves from their reverie: they thanked the Chourineur for the information he had given, but he inspired them with much less confidence since he had so sincerely but vulgarly expressed such boundless admiration for Rodolphe. As he went out, the wind blew with increased violence, and the rain poured in torrents.

The Brigand and La Chouette, hidden in the alley opposite, saw the Chourineur when he came out: he turned towards

that part of the street where was a house in process of demolition; soon his footsteps, a little heavy by his frequent libations during the evening, were lost amid the howlings of the wind and the noise of the rain splashing against the walls.

Tom and Sarah left the tavern, notwithstanding the tempest, and took an opposite direction from that of the Chourineur. "They are lost," said the Brigand, quietly, to his companion. "Uncork your vitriol—attention!" "Let us take off our shoes, so they can't hear us behind them" said La Chouette. "You are right, always right: I should not have thought of that: let us tread as if on velvet." The horrible couple took off their shoes, gliding along in the shade close to the houses. By this stratagem, the noise of their footsteps was so deadened, that they followed close behind Tom and Sarah without being perceived. "Fortunately, our hack is at the corner of the street, or we should be drenched," said Tom. "Are you cold, Sarah?"

"Perhaps we might learn something from this smuggler—this Bras-Rouge," answered Sarah, without replying to his question. Suddenly he stopped; he was not far from the place designated by the Brigand. "I have mistaken the street," said Tom; "we ought to have turned to the left in coming out of the tavern. I remember a house in ruins that we must pass to find our way: let us go back." The Brigand and Chouette sprang in a doorway, to escape recognition: they were so near that Tom and Sarah, in turning, almost elbowed them. "Upon the whole, I'd rather they'd go that way," said the Brigand. "If the gentleman kicks —I have another idea."

Tom and Sarah, after having repassed the tapis-franc, drew near a house in ruins; this building being about half demolished, its open vault formed a sort of gulf extending along the street. The Brigand sprang upon his victim with the bound of a tiger, and seizing Tom by the throat, he cried, "Your money, or I'll throw you in this hole." Then pushing him backward, held him, as it were, suspended over the vault, while with the other hand he seized the arm of Sarah as with a vice. In the meanwhile, La Chouette emptied his pockets with marvellous dexterity. Sarah uttered no cry, but said in a calm tone, "Give them your purse, Tom;" and then, addressing the Brigand, said, "We will make no noise—do us no harm." La Chouette, after having scrupulously examined the pockets of both the victims, said to Sarah,

"Let me look at your hands, to see if you have any rings. No," said the old woman, grumbling; "then you have no one to give you rings: what misery!" The sang froid of Tom did not desert him during this unlooked-for scene.

"Will you make a bargain?" said he. "My portfolio contains papers that will be useless to you; bring them to me to-morrow, and I will give you twenty-five Louis." "Yes, to catch me in a trap," answered the Brigand. "Come! clear out, and don't look behind you; you are fortunate in getting off thus." "A moment," said La Chouette; "if he means what he says, there is a way; he shall have his papers." Then addressing Tom, she said, "Do you know the plain of St. Denis?" "Yes." "Do you know St. Ouen?" "Yes." "Well, opposite St. Ouen, at the end of the road of the 'Revolte,' the country is level, and over the fields one can see to a great distance; do you come there to-morrow alone: bring your money, and you'll find me there with the portfolio—touch and take—I will give it to you."

"But he will mob you, La Chouette!"

"Not such a fool! no he won't; I can see so far. I have only one eye, but it is a good one; if the gentleman brings any one with him, he'll not find any one—I'll be off."

Sarah appeared to be struck with a sudden idea, for she said to the Brigand, "Do you want to earn some money?" "Yes." "Did you see in the tavern from whence we have just come—for now I recognise you—did you see the man the coalman called out?"

"A slender young man, with moustaches? Yes; I was just going to eat a morsel of that bird, but he did'nt give me time, for he stunned me with two such heavy blows; they overturned me on the table—first time it has happened. Oh! I will have revenge!"

"Well! it is concerning him I speak," said Sarah. "Of him?" cried the Brigand. "Give me one thousand francs, and I will kill him for you."

"Sarah!" cried Tom, in alarm. "Wretch! I have no idea of having him murdered," said Sarah. "What do you want, then?" "Come to-morrow to the plain of St. Denis; you will find my companion there," continued she; you will find him alone, and he will tell you what I want you to do. "It is not one, but two thousand francs I will give you, if you succeed!"

"Fourline," whispered La Chouette, "there is money to be made; these are rich folks, who want something to be done to an enemy; and this enemy is the young cock who wanted to fight you—must go. I'll go in your place. Two thousand francs! my man, that's worth the trouble." "Well, my wife shall go," said the bandit. "You can tell her what is to be done, and I'll see."

"Very well! to-morrow at one o'clock, at the plain of Saint Denis, between Saint Ouen and the road of the Revolte—you understand?" "Yes! you have said it—I'll bring your portfolio." "And you shall have the promised five hundred francs, and something on account of the other business, if you are reasonable." "Now, do you go to the right, we to the left, and don't follow us, unless—" and the Brigand and La Chouette ran off rapidly. "The devil has come to our assistance," said Sarah "This Bandit may be of use to us." "Sarah, now I am afraid," said Tom. "As for me, I have no fear; on the contrary, I hope—but come, come now; I know where we are: the carriage cannot be far off."

The two persons directed their rapid steps towards the square of Nôtre Dame; but an invisible witness had been present at this scene: it was the Chourineur, who had crouched among the ruins to shelter himself from the fury of the storm. The proposition made by Sarah to the Brigand relative to Rodolphe interested the Chourineur very much: alarmed at the dangers which menaced his new friend, he regretted that he did not know how to warn him; his hatred for the Brigand and La Chouette had, perhaps, something to do with this sentiment. He resolved to advise Rodolphe of the perils which threatened him: but how was he to do it? He had forgotten the address of the soi-disant fan painter, and perhaps he would never revisit the tapis-franc; how should he find him? In making these reflections, the Chourineur had mechanically followed Tom and Sarah, and saw them get into the hack which waited for them at the square of Nôtre Dame.

The carriage was driven off. A bright idea struck the Chourineur; he sprang behind the vehicle. At one o'clock in the morning the carriage stopped on the boulevard of the "Observatoire," and Tom and Sarah disappeared in one of the small streets which terminate at this place. The night was dark, and the Chourineur could not see any thing by which he might recognise

the place the next day; so, with the sagacity of an Indian, he drew his knife, and made a profound gash in one of the trees near which the carriage stopped, and then regained his lodging-place, from which he had wandered a considerable distance.

For the first time in a long while the Chourineur enjoyed a sound sleep, which was not interrupted by the vision of the sergeant and the soldiers.

CHAPTER VIII.

PROMENADE.

The next morning the storm had ceased, and a bright autumnal sun shone out from a cloudless sky, although always gloomy from the height of the houses; the hideous quarter which we have described seemed less horrible when seen by the light of a fine day. Whether Rodolphe feared no longer to meet the two persons whom he had avoided the evening before, or whether he braved them, towards eleven o'clock in the morning he entered the Rue aux Fèves and turned towards the tavern of the Ogresse. He was still dressed as a workman, yet there was to be remarked in his clothing a certain style; his new blouse opened on the breast, leaving visible his shirt of red wool, fastened by many silver buttons; the collar of another shirt, of white linen, was turned negligently over his black cravat, carelessly knotted around his neck; from his light blue velvet cap escaped some curls of chestnut hair: boots perfectly varnished replaced the heavy nailed shoes of the night previous, showing a charming foot, which appeared still smaller as it was half concealed by broad trousers of olive velveteen. This costume rather set off the elegant figure of Rodolphe, a rare mixture of grace, activity, and strength.

The Ogresse was strutting up and down before the tapis-franc when Rodolphe appeared.

"Your servant, young man! You have, no doubt, come for your change of the twenty francs!" said she, with a kind of deference, not daring to forget that the conqueror of the Chourineur had thrown upon her counter a Louis. "There's just seventeen livres ten sous due to you; that is not all—some one came to ask after you: a tall man well wrapped up; he had on his legs immense boots, like a drum-major in citizen's clothes, and on his arm there was a little woman disguised as a man. They drank

some of my sealed wine with the Chourineur." "Ah! they drank with the Chourineur; and what did he say to them?" "When I say they drank, I am mistaken; they only wet their lips, and—" "I ask you what they said to the Chourineur?" "Oh! they spoke to him about Bras-Rouge, the rain, and fine weather." "Did they know Bras-Rouge?" On the contrary, the Chourineur explained to them who he was, and how you came to have a fight." "Never mind, I don't care about that." "You want your change?" "Yes; and I intend to take La Goualeuse to pass the day in the country." "Oh! impossible, my man."

"Why?" "She'd never come back. Her clothes belong to me, without reckoning that she owes me two hundred and twenty francs for board and lodging since she has been with me. If she was not just as honest as she is, I would never let her go out of my sight, unless—"

"The Goualeuse owes you two hundered and twenty francs?" "Two hundred and twenty francs and ten sous; but what are you a going to do? you don't say you are going to pay it? playing, my lord!" "Hold!" said Rodolphe, throwing eleven Louis on the counter. "Now, how much do you ask for the clothing you hire her?"

The amazed old woman scrutinized the Louis closely, one after the other. "Come, come! do you think I would give you bad money? send and get it changed, and let us finish. How much do you ask for the clothing?" The Ogresse, divided between the desire of making a good bargain, the astonishment at seeing a workman with so much money, and the fear of being duped, remained silent for a moment, when she cried,

"Her dress is worth at least—a hundred francs." "Such rags? Come, come! you shall keep the change you owe me from yesterday, and I will add a Louis, nothing more. To ransom anything from you is to steal from the poor who have a right to alms."

"Very well, Sir, I'll keep my clothes; out of this La Goualeuse shall not stir; I am free to do with my effects as I please." "May Lucifer burn you one of these days, according to your deserts! here is your money: go and call La Goualeuse."

The Ogresse pocketed the money, thinking that the workman had stolen or inherited it; she said to him with an ignoble smirk, "Why don't you go and call her yourself, my son? that will give her pleasure; for, on the faith of Mother Ponisse, she looked sweetly on you yesterday!"

"Go and seek her, and say that I will take her to the country; not a word more. Above all, I do not wish her to know that I have paid her debt." "Why not?" "What business is it of yours?" "Very well. I'd rather she should think that she is under my clutches." "Will you be silent? will you seek her?" "Oh! that wicked look! I pity those you command—well—I go, I go."

The Ogresse went up, and in a few minutes descended. "The Goualeuse will not believe me; she became as red as crimson when I said you were here; but when I told her that I would allow her to pass the day with you in the country, I thought she would have become mad; for the first time in her life, she seemed about to throw her arms around my neck." "It was for joy at leaving you."

At this moment Fleur de Marie entered, dressed as she was the evening previous; she blushed on seeing Rodolphe, and cast her eyes down in a confused manner. "Will you come and pass the day with me in the country, my child?" said Rodolphe, "Willingly, Mr. Rodolphe, since madame allows it." "I allow it, my little kitten, on account of your good conduct; come and embrace me," said the old wretch, holding out her pimpled face.

The unfortunate girl, surmounting her repugnance, approached her forehead to the lips of the Ogresse, but with a violent blow with his elbow, Rodolphe pushed the old woman into her bar, and taking the arm of Fleur de Marie, he went out of the tapis-franc amid the curses of Mother Ponisse. "Take care, Mr. Rodolphe," said La Goualeuse; "the Ogresse is going to throw something at your head; she is wicked enough." "Oh, never mind, my child; but what is the matter with you? you seem embarrassed—sad? are you sorry to come with me?" "On the contrary; but you give me your arm." "Well!" "You are a workman; some one may say to your master that he met you with me; that may do you harm: they don't approve of such company," said she gently disengaging her arm from that of Rodolphe. "Go on alone; I will follow you to the Varrière: when once in the country, I will join you." "Fear nothing," said Rodolphe, touched by this delicacy, and retaking the arm of Fleur de Marie. "My master does not reside in this quarter; and, besides, I am going to find a carriage on the 'Quai aux Fleurs.'" "As you please, M. R[illegible]he; I only said that to prevent you getting into trou-

ble," "I believe you, and I thank you; but answer me frankly: Is it equally agreeable to what part of the country we go?" "Oh! it is all the same to me, as long as it is the country—it is so pleasant—the pure air is so good to breathe! Do you know that for five months I have been no farther than the flower-market? and if the Ogresse allowed me to go out of the cité, it was because she had confidence in me."

"And when you came to this market, was it to buy flowers?" "Oh no; I had no money; I only came to see them, to inhale their rich perfume; for the half hour that the Ogresse allowed me to pass on the 'Quai' during market days, I was so happy that I forgot all." "And when you returned to the Ogresse, to those horrid streets?" "I came back more sorrowful than I set out. I choked down my tears to prevent a beating. I'll tell you what it was at the market that used to make me very envious, oh! very envious. It was to see the little work girls so neatly clad, going off so gaily with a fine pot of flowers in their arms." "I am sure if you had only had some flowers in your window, they would have been companions for you." "It is very true, what you say, Mr. Rodolphe. Imagine; one day, the Ogresse at her 'fête,' knowing my taste, gave me a little rosebush: if you could only know how happy I was! I was no longer lonesome! I could not keep from looking at my rosebush. I amused myself in counting its leaves, its flowers. But the air is so bad in 'the cité' that, at the end of two days, it began to fade; but you'll laugh at me, Mr. Rodolphe." "No, no; go on."

"Well, then, I asked permission from the Ogresse to take my rose out for an airing; yes, as I would have taken out a child. I brought it to the 'quai;' I thought to myself, that being in company with other flowers, in this fine and balmy air, would do it good; I moistened its poor withered leaves with the pure water of the fountain, and then I warmed it awhile in the sun; dear little rose-tree, it never saw the sun in 'the cité,' for in our street it comes no lower than the roof. At length I returned; and I assure you, Mr. Rodolphe, that my rosebush lived, perhaps, ten days longer than it would have done without the airings." "I believe it; but when it died, that must have been a great loss to you?"

"I wept for it—I was very sorry. Besides, Mr. Rodolphe, since you understand how one can love flowers, I can tell it to

you; well! I felt grateful to it—ah! now, this time you are laughing at me." "No, no! I love, I adore flowers; thus I can comprehend all the 'follies' they cause one to do, or that they inspire."

"Well! I felt grateful to this poor rosebush for having flowered so prettily for me—such a one as me." The Goualeuse held down her head, and became purple with shame. "Poor child, with this consciousness of your horrible position, you must have often—" "Had a wish to put an end to it; is it not, Mr. Rodolphe?" said La Goualeuse, interrupting her companion. Oh! yes, more than once I have looked at the Seine from the parapet; but then I turned to the flowers, the sun; I said to myself, the river will always be there—I am only sixteen—who knows?" "When you said, who knows? you had a hope?" "Yes." "And what did you hope for?" "I do not know—I hoped—yes, I hoped, 'in spite of me.' At those moments it seemed to me that my fate was not merited; that there was some good left in me. I said to myself, I have been very much troubled, but at least I have never harmed any one. If I had only had some one to counsel me, I should not be where I am. That dissipated my sorrow a little. After all, I must confess that these thoughts occurred oftener after the loss of my rosebush," added La Goualeuse in a solemn manner, which made Rodolphe smile. "This great grief always—yes, look here;" and the Goualeuse drew from her pocket a little wooden packet, carefully made, and tied with a pink favour. "You have preserved it?" "I think so; it is all that I possess in the world." "How? have you nothing you can call your own?" "Nothing." "But this coral necklace?" "It belongs to the Ogresse." "How? do you not own a rag, a hat, a handkerchief?" "No, nothing, nothing but the dry leaves of my withered rosebush. It is on this account I prize it so much."

At each word, the astonishment of Rodolphe was redoubled; he could not comprehend this frightful slavery, this horrible sale of soul and body for a wretched shelter, some tattered clothes, and a nourishment impure.

They arrived at the 'Quai aux Fleurs;' a carriage was waiting; Rodolphe assisted his companion to get in, and after placing himself by her side, said to the coachman, "To St. Denis; I will tell you directly which road to take."

The horses started; the sun was radiant, the sky without a

cloud, but the cold was a little sharp, and the air circulated briskly through the open windows of the carriage. "Hold, a woman's cloak?" said La Goualeuse, remarking that she was seated on such a garment, which she had not before perceived. "Yes, it is for you, my child; I brought it along, fearing you might be cold; wrap yourself up well." Unaccustomed to any such care, the poor girl looked at Rodolphe with astonishment. The species of intimidation the latter had caused her increased each moment, as also a vague sadness she could not account for.

"My God! Mr. Rodolphe, how kind you are! you make me quite ashamed."

"Because I am kind?" "No; but—it seems to me that you no longer speak as you did yesterday—that you are some other—"

"Come, Fleur de Marie, would you rather I should be the Rodolphe of yesterday, or the Rodolphe of to-day?" "I like you more as you are to-day; yet yesterday I seemed to be more your equal." Then, fearing she had mortified Rodolphe, she added, "When I say your equal, Mr. Rodolphe, I know that that cannot be." "There is one thing in you that surprises me, Fleur de Marie." "What is that, Mr. Rodolphe?" "You seem to forget that La Chouette told you yesterday she knew your parents—that she knew your mother." "Oh! I have not forgotten that; I thought of it all night, and I have wept bitterly; but I am sure it is not true. The Borgnesse invented this story to give me pain." "It may be that La Chouette knows more than you imagine: if it is so, would you not be happy to find your mother?" "Alas! Mr. Rodolphe, if my mother never loved me, what good would it be to find her? She would not see me—what a disgrace it would be to her! it would perhaps kill her."

"If your mother loved you, Fleur de Marie, she would pity you, she would pardon you, she would love you again. If she has forsaken you, in seeing to what a horrible fate her actions have reduced you, her shame would be your revenge." "And why should I be revenged? If I were, it seems to me that I should no longer have the right to consider myself unfortunate; this often consoles me." "Perhaps you are right; let us speak no more about it."

At this moment the carriage arrived near "St. Ouen," at the junction of the road to St. Denis and La Révolte.

Notwithstanding the monotonous appearance of the country, Fleur de Marie was so delighted at seeing the fields, that, forgetting the sad thoughts which the recollections of La Chouette had awakened in her mind, her charming face brightened up; she leaned out of the windows, and clapping her hands, cried, "Mr. Rodolphe, what delight—fields! and thickets! If you would only let me alight—the weather is so fine! I would like so much to run in the meadows!"

"We will take a run, my child. Coachman, stop!"

"How! you also, Mr. Rodolphe?"

"I also? yes, we will make it a holiday."

"What happiness, Mr. Rodolphe!"

And he and Fleur de Marie, hand in hand, ran over the new-mown field until they were out of breath.

To attempt to describe the gambols, the little joyous shouts, the delight of Fleur de Marie, would be impossible. Poor Gazelle! for so long time a prisoner. She breathed the pure air with intoxication; she came, she went, she ran, she stopped, always with fresh transports. At the sight of several tufts of daisies, and some marigolds, spared by the first frost of approaching winter, she could not refrain from new exclamations of delight; she did not leave one of the flowers, but gleaned the whole meadow. After having thus run over the fields, soon tired, being unaccustomed to so much exercise, the young girl, stopping to take breath, went and seated herself on the trunk of a tree, near a deep ditch.

The fair and transparent complexion of Fleur de Marie, ordinarily too pale, was now heightened with the most lively colour. Her large blue eyes shone sweetly, her rosy mouth half open, disclosed her pearl-like teeth, and her heart throbbed under the little orange shawl; she kept one hand on her bosom, as if to compress its pulsations, while with the other she extended to Rodolphe the flowers she had gathered. Nothing could be more charming than the innocent, joyous expression which shone on this lovely face. As soon as she could speak, she said to Rodolphe, with touching 'naïveté,'

"How good is the Almighty for having given us such a fine day!"

A tear came to the eyes of Rodolphe at this poor, abandoned, despised, lost creature, without home, without bread, offering

thus a cry of joy and thanks to the Creator, because she enjoyed a ray of sunshine and the sight of a meadow. * * * *

Rodolphe was aroused from his meditations by an unlooked-for incident.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SURPRISE.

The Goualeuse was seated, as we have said, on the trunk of a tree, which had been overturned near a deep ditch. Suddenly a man, shaking off the straw with which he was covered, rose out of this excavation, with a terrible shout of laughter. Fleur de Marie, turning round, screamed with affright. It was the Chourineur. "Don't be afraid, my dear," said he, seeing the terror of the young girl, who had immediately flown to the side of her companion. "Here is a lucky meeting, Master Rodolphe, you did'nt expect it? nor I neither;" then adding, in a serious tone, "Look here, master, do you see, people may say what they please, but there is something in the air—above—over our heads —it seems as if the good God says to man, Go, I order you; for he has ordered you here, which is most wonderfully astonishing!" "What are you doing there?" said Rodolphe, very much surprised. "I was watching the corn for you, my master; but thunder! what a farce that you should come, just in the very environs of my country-house—hold! there is something—decidedly there is something in it." "But once more, I ask you what are you doing there?" "Directly you shall know all about it; just give time to take an observation from your observatory. He ran towards the carriage, then stopped, and took a rapid glance over the immense plains, and quietly returned to Rodolphe.

"Will you explain to me what all this means?" "Patience! master—one word; what is it o'clock?" "Half-past twelve," said Rodolphe, looking at his watch. "Good—we have time; La Chouette will not be here for half an hour." "La Chouette!" cried Rodolphe and the young girl at the same time. "Yes, La Chouette. In two words, master, here is my story: yesterday, after you left the tapis-franc there came—"

"A tall man, accompanied by a woman disguised as a man; they asked for me. Afterward they asked me to drink, and wanted to talk about you. I was'nt willing to say anything

—as you had not told me anything, except the 'rinsing' you had the politeness to give me. I knew none of your secrets, and even if I had known anything, it would have been the same—it is between us, you know, Master Rodolphe—thine till death. May the devil burn me if I can tell why I feel for you the same attachment that a bulldog has for his master; but it is all the same—so it is—it is too much for me—I can't understand it—I leave it to you."

'I thank you, my man: but continue."

"The tall man and the little woman, finding they could get nothing out of me, went out from the Ogresse, and so did I—they towards the 'Palais de Justice,' I towards 'Nôtre Dame.' Arrived at the end of the street, I began to perceive it was raining pitchforks—a perfect deluge! There was quite near an old, half-torn-down house; I said to myself, if the shower continues, I can sleep as well there as at my lodgings; so I crept into a sort of cellar, where I was sheltered. I made my bed on a beam my pillow of some old plaster, and there I was lodged like a king."

"Afterward—afterward?" "We had drank together, Master Rodolphe, and then I had drank with the tall man and the little woman; I mean to tell you that I had my head a little heavy: and, besides, there is nothing that rocks me to sleep like the dropping of rain. I began to doze; I had not been long asleep when a voice suddenly awoke me: it was the Brigand, who was closely talking with some one. I listened—thunder!—what do I recognise? the voice of the tall man who had come to the tapis-franc, with the little woman disguised."

"They were talking with the Brigand and La Chouette?" said Rodolphe, stupified. "Yes, and they agreed to meet him again to-day." "To-day!" said Rodolphe. "At one o'clock." "It will be in a minute!" "At the branching off of the Route St. Denis and La Révolte." "This very spot." "As you say, Master Rodolphe—it is here!" "The Brigand! take care, Mr. Rodolphe," cried Fleur de Marie. "Be calm, my dear—he is not coming—only La Chouette." "How did this man become acquainted with these two wretches?" asked Rodolphe. "I, faith! I know nothing about that; besides, I must have awoke just at the end of matters; for the tall man spoke of ransoming his portfolio, which La Chouette was to bring here, in exchange for five hundred francs; I rather think that the Brigand must have begun

by robbing, and ended by making friends." "That is strange." "My God! that frigthens me for you, Mr. Rodolphe," said Fleur de Marie. "Master Rodolphe is not a child, my dear, but, as you say, it may be something disagreeable to him—so here am I."

"Continue, my boy." "The tall man and the small woman promised two thousand francs to the Brigand—to do to you—I don't know what; it is La Chouette who is to come here, to bring back the portfolio, and to know what they want; and then she is to go back to the Brigand, who will do the rest."

Fleur de Marie trembled; but Rodolphe smiled disdainfully. "Two thousand francs for doing something to you, Master Rodolphe; that made me think (no comparisons) that when I see a reward of five hundred francs offered for a lost dog, I say modestly to myself, Oh, you are a lost animal, for they would not give even five francs to get you. Two thousand francs for doing something to you! Who are you, then?" "I will tell you by-and-by." "Enough, master. When I heard this proposition made to La Chouette; I said to myself, I must find out where these rich folks, who want to set the Brigand on the tracks of Mr. Rodolphe roost. it may serve him. When they went off, I crept out of the ruins and followed them like a wolf. At Nôtre Dame they got into a carriage; I clambered up behind, and thus we drove to the Boulevard de l'Observatoire.' It was as black as a furnace; I could see nothing, so I made a notch in one of the trees, that I could recognise it in the daytime." "Very well! my boy."

"This morning I returned there. At ten steps from my tree I saw a small lane shut by a gate; in the mud of the lane I saw large steps and small ones: at the end of the lane a house: the nest of our birds must be there."

"Thank you, my brave fellow; you render me, without suspecting it, a great service." "Pardon me, Mr. Rodolphe, but I did suspect—it was for this I did it." "I know it, my lad, and I wish I could recompense your services otherwise than by thanks; unfortunately, I am only a poor devil of a workman, although they will give, as you say, two thousand francs to do something to me." I will explain that to you. "Good, if it pleases you; if not, all the same; they threaten you with some harm, I oppose it: the rest is none of my business."

"I imagine what they want: listen; I have a secret for cutting the iron for my fans by machinery; but this secret does not be-

long to me alone; I await my partner to put this in operation, and certainly must be the model that I have at home that they wish to get hold of, at any price; for there is much money to be made by this discovery." "The tall man and his companion are then—" "The people for whom I work, and to whom I would not sell my secret." This explanation appeared satisfactory to the Chourineur, whose intelligence was not singularly developed, and he continued:

"I understand now—only see what cowards! they have not the courage so do their dirty work themselves. But to put an end to my story, I said to myself this morning, I know the 'rendezvous' of these people; I'll go and see what they are going to do. My employer will wait for me—no matter. I arrived here —I saw this hole—I took an armful of straw from yonder, and I covered myself to the end of my nose, to wait for La Chouette; but behold, you make your appearance on the plain, and this poor Goualeuse comes and takes a seat just on the border of my park; faith, I wanted to have some fun, so I cried like a savage, and rose up from my litter."

"Well! and now what is your intention?"

"To wait for La Chouette, who will certainly arrive first, and try to hear what she will say to the tall man, because perhaps it may serve you. There is no other tree overturned in the whole field; from this place one can see all around; it is as if it were made expressly that one might take a seat. The 'rendezvous' of La Chouette is only four steps from this, at the branching of the roads; I'd bet that they would come and sit here: if they don't, and I can't hear what they have to say, when they separate I'll fall upon La Chouette, and I'll pay her what is her due for taking out the tooth of the poor Goualeuse, and I'll squeeze her throat until she tell me the name of the parents of the poor girl. What do you think of my plan, Master Rodolphe?"

"There are some good ideas, my good fellow: but I will suggest some alterations.

"Oh! in the first place, Chourineur, you must not quarrel on my account. If you strike La Chouette, the Brigand—"

"Stop my dear sir. La Chouette must pass through my hands. Thunder! it is just because she has the Brigand to defend her that I'll double the dose."

"Listen, my man. I have a better plan to revenge La Goua-

leuse for the cruel treatment of La Chouette. I will tell you what this is later. As for the present," said Rodolphe retreating a few steps from the side of La Goualeuse, and lowering his voice, "as for the present, do you wish to render me a real service?"

"Speak Master Rodolphe."

"La Chouette does not know you!"

"I saw her yesterday at the tapis-franc, for the first time."

"Now this is what you must do: you will conceal yourself at first;" but when you see her arrive here, you must come out of your retreat." "To wring her neck?"

"No, No, not now! I only wish you to prevent her speaking with this man: seeing some one with her, he will not dare to approach. if he does, do not leave her for a moment; he cannot make his propositions before you."

"If, the man finds me too inquisitive, I'll do his business; he is neither a brigand nor a Master Rodolphe."

"I know the citizen; he will not meddle with you."

"Well, well! I'll stick to La Chouette like a shadow. The man shan't say a word that I don't hear, and he'll have to make tracks."

"If they agree upon another place of meeting, you will know it, or your presence will suffice to send off the gentleman."

"Good, good. Afterward I shall give a small twist to La Chouette! I hold to that bet."

"Not yet. La Borgnesse does not know whether you are a robber or not!"

"No, unless the Brigand may have told her that it was not according to my ideas."

"If she has told her so, you must pretend to have changed your principles."

"I!" "You!"

"Speak, master; I'll obey."

"As soon as the man is gone, you must try to coax La Chouette."

"I? the old she-devil! I'd much rather fight the Brigand. I hardly know whether I shall be able to keep from clawing right hold of her hide."

"Then you will spoil all."

"Well, what is it, then, that I must do?"

"The Chouette will be outrageous at the windfall that has es-

caped her; you must try to soothe her, by saying that you know of some good business to be done: that you are there waiting for your accomplice: and that, if the Brigand has a mind to join there is a good deal of gold to be gained."

"I listen! go on, master."

"After waiting about an hour you must say, 'My comrade does not come, it is put off;' then you must agree upon a 'rendezvous' for to-morrow, at an early hour, with La Chouette and the Brigand. Do you understand?" "I comprehend."

"And this night you will be at the corner of the Champs Elysées and the Allée des Veuves; I will meet you there, and I will then tell you the rest."

"If it is a snare, take care! The Brigand is an evil spirit; you have struck him: there is no donbt he is capable of killing you." "Be not alarmed."

"Thunder! it is a farce: but you do with me just as you please: there is some nice broth to be cooked for the Brigand and La Chouette; yet one word more, Master Rodolphe." "Speak."

"It is not that I think you capable of setting a trap to have him caught by the police; he is a finished scoundrel, who has merited death a hundred times—but to have him arrested—it is not my business."

"Nor mine, my good fellow; but I have an account to settle with him and La Chouette, since they are plotting with people against me; and with your assistance, we'll have a settlement."

"Oh! well, since the male is no better than the female, I consent."

"And if we succeed, said Rodolphe, in a serious, almost solemn manner, which startled the Chourineur "you will be as proud as when you saved from the fire and water the man and woman who owe you their life!"

"How you say that, Master Rodolphe! I never saw you look so before; but quick, quick, I see a white spot; it must be the cap of La Chouette. Go! I'll creep into my hole."

"To-night at ten o'clock."

"At the corner of the Allée des Veuves, and the Champs Elysées; understood."

Fleur de Marie had not heard this last conversation of the Chourineur and Rodolphe: she had got into the carriage with her companion.

CHAPTER X.

THE FARM.

After his conversation with the Chourineur, Rodolphe remained for some moments preoccupied and thoughtful.

Fleur de Marie, not daring to interrupt the silence of her companion, looked at him sorrowfully.

Rodolphe, raising his head, said to her, smiling kindly,

"What were you thinking about my child? The meeting with the Chourinenr has been disagreeable to you, has it not? We were so merry."

"It is, on the contrary, fortunate for us, Mr. Rodolphe, since the Chourineur can be useful to you." "Does this man pass among the frequenters of the tapis-franc as being any better than the rest, having any good qualities?" "I am ignorant, Mr. Rodolphe; before the scene of yesterday, I have often seen him, I thought him as wicked as the rest."

"Let us think no more about all this, my little Fleur de Marie. I should be very sorry if you became sad — I, who thought to make you pass a pleasant day."

"Oh! I am very happy! it is such a long time since I have been out of Paris."

"Not since your parties with La Rigolette!"

"My God! no, Mr. Rodolphe. In the country one is never tired of looking; everything is amusing.

"It is a pleasure to see how you are delighted with these things which make the charm of the country, Fleur de Marie."

And, in effect, as the young girl contemplated the peaceful and smiling landscape which was spread around her, once more her face resumed its soft expression.

"And there, that fire from the stubble in the field and this cart, with its two fat greys. If I were a man, I would like to be a farmer. Just such a day as this, for instance enough to make one sing songs, rather melancholy songs — like 'Genevieve.' Did you ever hear the song of 'Genevieve de Brabant,' Mr. Rodolphe?"

"No, my child; but if you are kind you will sing it for me when we get to the farm."

"What happiness! Are we going to a farm, Mr. Rodolphe?"

"'Tis to a farm belonging to my nurse, a good and worthy woman who has educated me."

"I bet you are thinking about your rosebush? You are sorry that you could not take it with you to the farm for an airing. Poor rosebush; no doubt you would have wished to give it some cream!"

La Goualeuse laughed at this pleasantry, and soon every trace of sorrow vanished from her brow.

As the carriage approached Saint Denis the tall spire of the church became visible.

"Oh! the beautiful steeple!" cried La Goualeuse.

"It is the steeple of the church of Saint Denis—a superb church: do you want to see it? I will stop the carriage." She cast down her eyes, and said, "Since I have lived with the Ogresse I have not been within the walls of a church; I have not dared. In the prison, on the contrary, I loved so dearly to sing at mass! and at the Fête Dieu we always made such beautiful bouquets for the altar!"

"But God is good and merciful: why do you fear to enter and pray in a church?"

"Oh! no, no, Mr. Rodolphe, it would be impious; it is enough to have offended the good God otherwise."

After a moment of silence, Rodolphe said, "To the present, have you ever loved?"

"Never, Mr. Rodolphe." "How comes that?"

"You have seen what kind of people frequented the tapis-franc; besides, to love, one must be honest." "What do you mean by that?"

"To depend on one's self—to be able—but, indeed, Mr. Rodolphe, if you please, let us not talk about this." "Well! come, let us talk of something else, Fleur de Marie; but why do you look at me thus? now see your beautiful eyes are filled again with tears: have I vexed you?" "No! on the contrary; but you are so good to me, that makes me feel like crying; and then, one would think that you had only brought me to the country just to please me, so contented you appear with my delight. Not content with having defended me yesterday, you make me pass such a delightful day with you.

"Truly, you are happy?"

"For a long time, I shall never forget this pleasure."

"Pleasure is so seldom found!" "Oh! yes, very seldom." "Truly, in default of that which I have not, I often amuse myself in thinking what I should like to have; I say to myself, there, that's what I should like—that's what I want; and you, Fleur de Marie, have you such dreams sometimes? do you build castles in the air?" Formerly, yes, in prison; before I went to the Ogresse, I passed my life in that and singing; but now, not so often. And you, Mr. Rodolphe, what is it you wish for?"

"I? oh! I want to be very rich—to have servants, horses, carriages, a fine house, and to go into society—every day to the play. And you, Fleur de Marie?" "I should not be so difficult: enough to pay my debt to the Ogresse, some money to support me until I could find work, and a nice little clean room, where I could see the trees when I worked."

"And plenty of flowers in your window?"

"Oh! certainly. To dwell in the country, if I could, and that is all."

"A small room for work is a necessity; but when one has only to wish, one can allow some superfluities. Have you never wished for carriages, diamonds, fine dresses?"

"Oh no! I never had any such wishes—to be free, live in the country, and to be sure that I should not die in a hospital. Oh, this last—above all, not to die there. Ah! Mr. Rodolphe, this thought often comes to me—it is frightful!" "Alas! we poor folks." "It is not on account of misery that I say this; but after—when one is dead—"

"Well?" "Do you not know what is done with you after death, Mr. Rodolphe?" "No." "There was a young girl that I knew in prison—she died at the hospital, and they gave her body to the surgeons," whispered the young girl, shuddering. "Oh! that is horrible! And have you often had such gloomy thoughts, poor child?"

"It astonishes you, does it not, Mr. Rodolphe, that I should feel any shame? for, after my death—Alas! my God! it is all they have left me."

These sad and bitter words affected Rodolphe; he concealed his face in his hands, and thought of the fatality which had pressed on Fleur de Marie; he thought of the mother of the poor creature—her mother—was she rich, happy, perhaps honoured?

Honoured—rich—happy; and her child, whom she had doubt-

less sacrificed to shame, had left the hovel of La Chouette for the the prison, the prison for the den of the Ogresse; and from this she might go to die in a hospital; and after her death—It was frightful.

The poor Goualeuse, seeing the gloomy air of her companion, said to him, sorrowfully, "Pardon me, Mr. Rodolphe; I ought not to have such ideas. You take me with you to make me joyful, and yet I am always telling you such sad things—so sad! My God! I do not know how it happens; it is in spite of myself. I have never been happier than I have to-day, yet the tears are constantly coming to my eyes. You don't like it, Mr. Rodolphe? besides, you see, this sadness goes away as it comes—very quick. Now see already I think no more about it. I will be reasonable —there Mr. Rodolphe, look at my eyes."

And Fleur de Marie, after having shut her eyes two or three times, to chase away a rebel tear, opened them wide, and looked at Rodolphe with a charming smile. "Fleur de Marie, I beg you not to restrain yourself. Be gay if you wish to be gay—sorrowful if you wish to be sorrowful. My God! I who speak to you sometimes have gloomy thoughts. I should indeed be very unhappy to feign a joy I do not feel."

"Truly, Mr. Rodolphe, are you sad sometimes?"

"Without doubt; the future appears no clearer for me than for you. I have no father nor mother; were I to fall sick to-morrow, how should I live? I spend that which I gain as fast as it is earned."

"You are wrong, do you see, very wrong, Mr. Rodolphe," said the Goualeuse, in a tone of grave remonstrance, which made Rodolphe smile: "you ought to put something in the Savings-Bank; for all my troubles came from not economizing my money. With two hundred francs before him, a workman would never be an expense to any one—never embarrassed; and it is often these embarrassments which give you bad counsels." "All this is very wise, very sensible, my little monitress. But two hundred francs? how is one to earn two hundred francs?"

"Oh! Mr. Rodolphe, it is very simple; let us reckon a little; you shall see. You gain sometimes five francs a day?" "Yes, when I work."

"But you must work every day. Are you to be pitied? such fine work as yours—fan painting; why it ought to be a pleasure.

Come, you are not reasonable, Mr. Rodolphe," added La Goualeuse, in a solemn manner. "A workman ought to live, nay, can live, very well on three francs; then you would have two francs left—at the end of a month sixty—sixty francs a month —quite an amount!"

"Yes; but it is so agreeable to walk about, to do nothing."

"Mr. Rodolphe, once more, you have no more reason than a child." "Well! I will be more reasonable, you little scold; you have given me some new ideas. I never thought of it."

"Truly!" cried the young girl, clapping her hands with joy; "if you only knew how happy you make me! You will, then, economize the two francs a day, surely?" "Come, I will do it," said Rodolphe, smiling in spite of himself.

"You'll see how proud you'll be at your first savings; and, besides, this is not all; if you promise you will not be angry—"

"Do I look as if I could be angry?"

"No, certainly not; but I do not know if I ought to—"

"You ought to say everything to me, Fleur de Marie."

"Well! then, you, who, it is plain to be seen, are above your condition—how is it that you can frequent a tavern like that of the Ogresse?"

"If I had not been to the tapis-franc, I should not have the pleasure of taking you to the country to-day."

"It is true; but never mind, Mr. Rodolphe. I am as happy as possible with my excursion. Well, I would renounce, with all my heart, passing such another, if it can do you any harm."

"Just the contrary, for you have given me such excellent advice about my affairs."

"And you will follow it?"

"I have promised you on my word of honour; I will economize at least forty sous a day."

CHAPTER XI.

THE WISHES.

At this moment Rodolphe said to the Coachman, who had passed the village of Sarcelles, "Take the first road to the right, pass through Villiers-le-Bel, and then to the left; keep straight on." Then addressing La Goualeuse, he said, "Now that you are satisfied with me, Fleur de Marie, we can amuse ourselves, as we

said just now, by building castles in the air; it won't cost much, so you can't scold me for being extravagant."

"Oh no. You begin."

"Let me see if you can guess what my choice would be, Mr. Rodolphe."

"I'll try. I will suppose that this road—I say this road, because we are on it."

"Oh, yes! that is right; there's no use in looking farther."

"I'll suppose, then, that this road will lead us to a charming village, some distance from the main road."

"Yes, it will be more quiet and tranquil."

"It is built on a rising ground, and surrounded by trees."

"And there's a little streamlet close by?"

"Exactly so—a streamlet. At the end of the village there is a beautiful farm, and a dining-room for the mistress." "The house must have green blinds; they look so cheerful, Mr. Rodolphe."

"Green blinds—I am of your opinion; there is nothing so lively as green blinds. Naturally, the mistress of the farm would be your aunt."

"Oh! naturally. And she would be a kind, good woman."

"Excellent woman, who would love you as a mother."

"Good aunt! that must be so delightful, to be loved by some one!" "And you would love her also?"

"Ah!" cried Fleur de Marie, joining her hands, and lifting her eyes towards heaven with an expression of happiness, impossible to describe, "Oh! yes. I would love her, and, besides, I would aid her with her work—to sew, wash, bleach—to dry fruits for the winter, enough for the whole household. She should not complain of my idleness, I assure you. The morning—"

"Stop, stop! Fleur de Marie; how impatient you are. Let me finish describing the house."

"Come, come, Mr. Painter, it is easy to perceive that you are accustomed to make pretty landscapes on your fans," said the Goualeuse, laughing.

"Little prattler, let me, then, finish my house."

"It is true that I do prattle: but it is so amusing! Mr. Rodolphe, I will listen: pray finish your house." "Your room shall be on the first floor." "My room! oh, how delightful. Come, let us see my room." And the youug girl leaned against Rodolphe, with her large eyes wide open, very curious.

"Your chamber shall have two windows, which look upon the flower-garden, and in the meadow through which the little river flows. On the other side of this river will be seen a little hill, all planted with chestnut trees, from the midst of which peeps the spire of a church." "Oh! how pretty, Mr. Rodolphe; it makes one desire to be there!"

"Three or four fine cows are grazing in the meadow, which is separated from the garden by a hedge of hawthorn." "And do I see the cows from my window!" "Perfectly." "Then there shall be one which shall be my favourite, Mr. Rodolphe. I'll make her a fine collar with a bell, and I'll accustom her to come and eat from my hands."

"She won't fail. She is very young, and pure white, and we'll call her Musette."

"Ah! what a pretty name; poor Musette! I love her already." "Let us finish your chamber, Fleur de Marie: it is hung with a pretty Persian chintz, with curtains to match. A honeysuckle and rosebush cover the walls of the house on this side, and hang over your windows, so that in the morning you have only to stretch out your hands and gather the fragrant blossoms." "Ah! Mr. Rodolphe, what a painter you are!" "Now, we'll see how you will pass the day. Your good aunt will come and awaken you in the morning by a gentle kiss on the forehead; she will bring you a bowl of warm milk, because your chest is weak, poor child! Then you'll get up; you'll go and see the farm, Musette, the chickens, your friends the pigeons, and the flowers in the garden. At nine o'clock your writing-master will arrive."

"My master?"

"You know you must learn to read, write, and keep accounts, so that you can help your aunt with the books of the farm."

"True, Mr. Rodolphe; I never think of anything. I must learn to read and write to help my aunt," said the poor girl, seriously, so much absorbed by the charming picture of this peaceable life, that she believed in its realities. "After your lessons, you will work at the linen of the house, or you will make yourself a pretty peasant bonnet. At two o'clock you will go to your writing, and then you will take a long walk with your aunt to see the haymakers in summer, and the labourers in the fall; you will return quite fatigued, bringing with you a handful of sweet herbs that you have culled in the meadows for Musette."

"For we will return by the meadow, won't we, Mr. Rodolphe?" "Without doubt; there is a wooden bridge over the river. At your return, bless me, it is six or seven o'clock, and a fine brisk fire is blazing in the large kitchen of the farm; you go there and warm yourself, and have a talk with the good folks just returned from the work of the farm; then you dine with your aunt. Sometimes the curate, or some old friend of the house, sits down to talk with you. After that, you read or work, while your aunt has her game of cards. At ten o'clock she kisses you, and you retire to your chamber. The next morning you begin again."

"I could live for a hundred years in that manner, and never be tired, Mr. Rodolphe."

"But all that is nothing to the Sundays and holidays."

"And those days, Mr. Rodolphe?"

"You will make yourself look very fine: you will put on your pretty peasant's dress, and the little round cap that becomes you so well; then you will get into the basket-waggon with your aunt, and James the farmboy, to go to grand mass at the village; after that, during the summer, you will not fail to go with your aunt to the fêtes of the surrounding parishes. You are so kind, so good, such a nice housekeeper, your aunt loves you so much, the curate will give such a good account of you, that all the young farmers of the environs will wish to dance with you, because that is the way all marriages begin. Thus, by-and-by, you will perceive one—and—"

Rodolphe, astonished at the silence of the young girl, turned to look at her: the poor girl could hardly restrain her sobs; for a moment deceived by the words of Rodolphe, she had forgotten the present, and the contrast of this present with a dream, a picture so charming and delightful, recalled the horrors of her position.

"Fleur de Marie, what is the matter?"

"Ah! Mr. Rodolphe, without intending it, you have caused me much chagrin. For a moment I believed in this paradise."

"But, poor child, this paradise exists—look—look; stop, coachman."

The carriage stopped. La Goualeuse mechanically raised her head. She found herself on the top of a hill: what was her astonishment—her amazement! The pretty village built on the

hill side, the farm, the meadow, the cows, the little river, the chestnut-trees, the church in the distance — the picture was before her eyes; nothing was wanting, even to Musette, a beautiful white heifer, the future favourite of La Goualeuse. This charming landscape was lighted up by a fine warm November sun. The yellow and purple leaves still covered the noble chestnut-trees, standing out in bold relief from the blue and smiling sky.

"Well! Fleur de Marie, what say you? Am I a good painter?" said Rodolphe, gaily.

The Goualeuse looked at him with surprise and inquietude: it seemed to her almost supernatural.

"How is this, Mr. Rodolphe? but, my God! is this a dream? it almost makes me afraid. How! what you have told me is—"

"Nothing is more simple, my child. The femière is my nurse; I was brought up here. I wrote to her this morning that I should come to-day to see her; I only painted after nature."

"Ah! it is true, Mr. Rodolphe!" said La Goualeuse, with a profound sigh.

CHAPTER VII.

THE FARM.

THE farm whither Rodolphe had conducted Fleur de Marie was situated without the village of Boqueval, a little solitary and unknown parish, distant about two leagues from Ecouen. The carriage, following the instructions of Rodolphe, was driven down a steep hill into a long avenue, bordered on either side by apple and cherry trees; the wheels rolled without noise on a carpet of short green turf, with which the by-roads are usually covered. Fleur de Marie, silent and sad, remained, notwithstanding her efforts, under the sad impressions, which Rodolphe reproached himself for having caused. At the end of a few moments the vehicle passed the large door of the court of the farm, and continuing along a thick hedge, stopped before a little rustic door of wood, half-concealed by a thick grape-vine, with its autumn purpled leaves.

"Here, we are arrived, Fleur de Marie," said Rodolphe. "Are you content?"

"Yes, Mr. Rodolphe; yet I feel as if I am ashamed to appear before the lady: I shall not dare to look at her."

"And why not, my child?"

"You are right, Mr. Rodolphe; she does not know me," said she, choking down a sigh.

They had no doubt, been watching for the arrival of Rodolphe; for, as the coachman opened the gate, a woman, of about fifty years of age, clothed as are generally the rich 'fermières' of the environs of Paris, with a face at once of a sweet and sad expression, appeared on the porch, and came to meet Rodolphe eagerly, but with much respect.

The Goualeuse became purple with shame, and descended from the carriage after a moment's hesitation.

"Good-day, my good Madame Georges," said Rodolphe; "you see I am punctual; then turning to the coachman, and putting some money in his hands, he said, "You can return to Paris."

The coachman, a little squat man, with his hat pulled over his eyes, and his face almost entirely concealed by the fur collar of his coat pocketed the money, made no answer, but mounting his seat, whipped up his horses, and soon disappeared down the green lane.

"After so long a drive, this dumb coachman appears in a great hurry to return," at first thought Rodolphe. "Bah! it is only two o'clock; no doubt he wants to get back as soon as he can, to make the most of the rest of the day;" so he attached no importance to his first observation. Fleur de Marie approached with a trembled and alarmed air, and whispered to him, so as not to be heard by Madame Georges, "My God! Mr. Rodolphe, pardon me. You have sent away the carriage—but the Ogresse! alas! I must return to her to-night, otherwise she will think me a thief: my clothes belong to her and I owe—" "Be comforted my child; it is for me to ask your pardon." "My pardon, and for what?" "For not having told you sooner that you can take off these miserable clothes for others that Madame Georges will furnish you. She has some that will suit you, and she will no doubt lend them to you: thus you see, she already commences her part of aunt."

Fleur de Marie thought she was in a dream, she looked alternately at Rodolphe aud Madame Georges, and could not believe what she had heard.

"How," said she, her voice trembling with emotion, "shall I return no more to Paris? shall I remain here? Madame will allow it? Can it be possible! this castle in the air already?"

"It was this farm—you see it realized."

"No, no, it is too much—too much happiness."

"One can never have too much happiness, Fleur de Marie."

"Ah! for pity's sake, Mr. Rodolphe, do not deceive me—it would kill me."

"My dear child, believe me," said Rodolphe, in a voice always affectionate, but with an accent of dignity, which Fleur de Marie had never yet heard. "Yes, you can from this day, if you wish, pass with Madame Georges, that peaceful life, of which the picture just now so much enchanted you. Although Madame Georges is not your aunt, yet she will have for you, when you know her, the most tender interest; you will pass for her niece with the people of the farm; this little deception will render your situation more agreeable. So I repeat once more, if it pleases you, Fleur de Marie, you can realize your dream of this morning. As soon as you are dressed as a little country girl," he added, smiling, "we will take you to see your future favourite, Musette, the pretty white heifer who is waiting for the fine collar you promised her: then we will go and take a glance at your friends, the pigeons, and then to the dairy. We will afterward take a walk over the farm; I hold to fulfil my promise."

Fleur de Marie clasped her little hands with force; surprise, joy, gratitude, and respect were expressed on her beautiful face; with her eyes bathed in tears, she cried,

"Mr. Rodolphe, are you, then, an angel from heaven, that you do so much good to the unfortunate without knowing them, and deliver them from shame and misery?" "My poor child," answered Rodolphe, with a smile of profound melancholy and ineffable goodness, "although young, I have in my life already suffered much; that will explain to you my compassion for those who suffer. Fleur de Marie, or, rather, Marie, go with Madame Georges. Yes, Marie, take henceforth this name, a name as sweet and pretty as you are! Before I leave, I must have some conversation with you, and I shall depart very happy, in knowing that you are so."

Fleur de Marie answered not a word, but she approached

Rodolphe, and bending her knees, took his hand, which she carried respectfully to her lips, with a movement filled with modesty and grace; then she followed Madame Georges, who appeared to regard her with great interest.

CHAPTER XIII.

MURPHY AND RODOLPHE.

Rodolphe turned his steps towards the court of the farm, where he found the tall man, who had advised him of the arrival of Tom and Sarah.

Murphy—such is the name of this person—was about fifty years of age; some white locks silvered the two little tufts of flaxen hair which curled on each side of his head, the top of which was quite bald; his face, large and rubicund, was completely shaved, except the whiskers, of deep red, which were suffered to grow on his fat cheeks. Notwithstanding his age and corpulency, Murphy was active and robust. His expression, although phlegmatic, was at the same time benevolent and resolute. He wore a white cravat, a large waistcoat, and a black coat with long skirts; his small clothes, of a greenish drab, were of the same material as his gaiters, with their pearl buttons; these were rather short, leaving his stockings, of unbleached wool, visible.

The dress and manly bearing of Murphy were a perfect picture of what the English call a gentleman farmer. However, Murphy was an English gentleman, and not a farmer.

At the moment Rodolphe entered the court, Murphy put into the pocket of a small travelling carriage a pair of pistols, which he had just carefully cleaned.

"Ah! what the devil are you doing with your pistols?" said Rodolphe to him. "That is my affair, my lord," said Murphy getting down from the steps.

"At what hour did you order the horses?"

"According to your orders, just at nightfall."

"You arrived this morning?" "At eight o'clock. Madame Georges had ample time to get all things ready."

"You appear to be out of humour; have you any fault to find with me?" "I have but too much, my lord—too much—one day with another—finally—the danger—it is your life." "You do very well to talk! If I were to let you alone, you would

run all risks." "And when you can do good without risking your life, where is the great harm, my lord?" "Where would be the great pleasure, Murphy?" "You," said he, shrugging his shoulders, "you! in such taverns!" "Oh! there you are, you John Bull, with your aristocratic scruples! believing your great lords superior beings to yourselves, poor lambs—proud of your own butchers!"

"If you were English you would comprehend this, my lord—'Honour to whom honour is due.' Besides, I should be a Turk, Chinese, or American, not to find you are wrong in thus exposing yourself. Last night, in that abominable street in the cité, in going to dig out that infernal Bras-Rouge, whom the devil confound—it was only the fear of offending you that kept me from giving you my aid in the conflict with the ruffian you met in that horrid alley." "That is to say, Mr. Murphy, that you had some doubts of my strength and courage!" "Unquestionably, you have given me reason a hundred times, to doubt neither the one nor the other. Thank God, Cribb of London taught you to box, and Lacour of Paris the use of the cane and the foot, the famous Bertrand has instructed you in fencing and in your trials with these professors, you have often had the advantage; you can kill a swallow on the wing with your pistol; you have muscles like steel; although slender and puny, you can beat me as easily as a race-horse can a dray-horse—that is true."

Rodolphe had complaisantly listened to this enumeration of his gladiatorial qualities; he answered, smiling, "Well, and what do you fear then?"

"I maintain, my lord, it is not suitable that you take by the collar the first blackguard you meet; I do not say this on account of the inconvenience it puts a certain honourable gentleman of my acquaintance to in blacking his face with charcoal, and looking like the devil. Notwithstanding my grey hairs, my corpulence, and my gravity, I'll disguise myself like a rope-dancer, if it will serve you; but yet I must say—"

"Oh! I know it well, old Murphy! when an idea is graven on your iron skull, when affection is planted in your brave and excellent heart, the devil must use his teeth and nails to draw them out."

"You flatter me, my lord; you meditate some—"

"My poor Murphy, you choose a poor time to lecture me!"

"Why?" "I am now in one of my moments of pride and happiness. I am here—" "In a place where you have done good!" "It is a place of refuge against your homilies."

"If it is, where the devil do you wish I should take you, my lord?" "Master Murphy, you flatter me; you wish to prevent some new folly."

"My lord, there are some for which I am very indulgent."

"Those of money?" "Yes; for, after all, with two millions of revenue—" "One is often in want, my poor Murphy." "To whom do you say this, my lord?"

"Yes! there are so many pleasures, so pure, so profound, which cost so little! What is there comparable to that which I enjoyed just now, when this unfortunate creature found herself in security here, and in her gratitude she kissed my hand? This is not all; my happiness has a long future; to-morrow, after to-morrow, I can still think with delight of the joys of this poor child, in this tranquil retreat, awakening each morning near Madame Georges, who will love her tenderly; for misfortune has sympathy with misfortune."

"Oh! as for Madame Georges, never were benefits better bestowed. Noble, courageous woman! an angel of virtue—an angel. I am rarely moved, but I am touched with the sufferings of Madame Georges. But as for your new protégée—hold, we won't talk about her, my lord." "Why not, Murphy?" "My lord, you do what seems to you to be good." "I do what is just," said Rodolphe, with a shade of impatience. "That which is just, according to your opinion."

"That which is just before God and my conscience," answered Rodolphe, severely. "Stop, my lord; we will talk no more about it—we shall not agree."

"No; I command you to speak," said Rodolphe, haughtily. "I have never so exposed myself that my lord has commanded me to be silent. I hope he will not command me to speak," answered Murphy, proudly.

"Murphy!" cried Rodolphe, with a tone of increasing irritation. "My lord!" "You know, sir, I like no concealments." "It is convenient for me to have concealment!" said Murphy, roughly.

"Learn, sir, that if I descend to familiarity with you, it is on condition that you raise yourself to equal me in candour!" It is

impossible to describe the sovereign dignity with which Rodolphe pronounced these last words. "My lord! I am fifty years of age; I am a gentleman; you ought not to speak thus to me." "Be quiet!" "My lord!" "Be quiet!" "My lord, it is unworthy of you to force a man of sensibility to recall the services he has rendered."

"Your services? and have I not paid them in every way?"

We must say, in justice to Rodolphe, that he had not attached that importance to these cruel words, which placed Murphy in the light of a mercenary; unfortunately, he interpreted them in this manner. He became purple with shame, struck his contracted fists on his bald head with an expression of mournful indignation then suddenly casting his looks on Rodolphe, whose whole frame shook with passion, Murphy suppressed a sigh, and said, in a voice of commiseration, "My lord, return to yourself; you are no longer reasonable!"

"These words gave the finishing stroke to the rage of Rodolphe; his eyes sparkled with savage brightness; his lips became white, and advancing towards Murphy with a threatening gesture, he cried, "And do you dare!" Murphy retreated a step, and said, as if in spite of himself, "My lord, my lord! remember the 13th of January!" "These words produced a magical effect upon Rodolphe; his face, contracted by passion, became relaxed; he looked fixedly at Murphy, cast down his head, and then, after a moment's silence, he said, or murmured, in a touching voice, "Ah! sir, you are cruel—I thought otherwise—and you again—you—" Rodolphe could not finish; his voice died away, and he fell, half sitting, on a seat of stone, and concealed his face in his hands.

"My lord," cried Murphy, "my good lord, pardon me; pardon your old faithful Murphy. It was only pushed to extremity; and fearing, alas! not for myself, but for you, the consequences of your passion, that I said it: I said it without anger, without reproach; I have said it in spite of myself, and with compassion. My God! who ought to know your character if I don't, who have not left you since your infancy! In pity say that you forgive me for having recalled to your mind that fatal day—alas! what expiations have you not—"

Rodolphe raised his head; he was very pale; he said to his companion, with a soft and sad voice,

"Enough, my old friend; I thank you for having stopped, with one word, this foolish quarrel. I will make no excuses for what I have said; you know, as we say at home, it is a long way from the heart to the lips. I was crazy—let us say no more about it."

"Alas! now I see you for a long time sad. How unfortunate I am! I desire nothing so much as to see you shake off this melancholy temperament, and by my foolish susceptibility I plunge you into it again. Good God! what is the use of being an honest man, and of having grey hairs, if it is not to endure the reproaches one does not merit! But no," continued Murphy, with an exultation quite comic from its contrast with his habitual calmness of mind; "bnt no, I must be flattered all the day long: they must say to me, 'Murphy, you are the model of attendants; there is no fidelity like yours; Murphy, you are an admirable man; Murphy, the devil—how good he is—oh! Murphy, brave Murphy! Get along old parrot; come, now, scratch your old grey head!'" then, recollecting the affectionate words Rodolphe had addressed to him at the commencement of their conversation, he cried out with renewed violence. "But did'nt he call me his good, faithful, kind Murphy—And I, to go on like a clown at an involuntary whim! at my age—my God! it is enough to make me tear my hair out;" and the poor man seized his head with both hands.

These words and this gesture were a sign that the paroxysm had arrived at its climax. Fortunately for Murphy, he was quite bald, which rendered his threat of no avail; for when the action succeeded the words, when his fingers only came in contact with the surface of his skull, shining and polished like marble, the worthy man was confused, and ashamed with his presumption; he accused himself of being a boaster, a romancer; however, to exculpate poor Murphy from this charge, he formerly possessed as fine a head of hair as had ever ornamented 'the cranium' of any gentleman of Yorkshire.

Ordinarily the disappointment of Murphy respecting his hair would have amused Rodolphe; but his thoughts were now too grave, too sad. However, wishing not to augment the regret of his companion, he said to him, with a gentle smile, "Listen, good Murphy. You appear to praise without reserve the good that I have done for Madame Georges." "My lord—" "And

to be astonished at the interest I have expressed for this poor girl!" "My lord, pardon me; I have been wrong;" "No; I conceive appearances have deceived you. Yet, as you assist me with as much fidelity as courage in the enterprise I have undertaken, it is my duty, to try to convince you that I have not acted lightly." "I know it, my lord."

"You know my ideas on the subject of what good a man can do. To assist honourable unfortunates who ask assistance, is well. To search after those who struggle with honour and energy and come to their aid—to prevent in time want, or temptation which might lead to crime—is better. To reinstate them in their own eyes—to render honest and good those who have preserved some good qualities amid all the misery that surrounded them, all the want that threatened them, all the scorn and contempt that withered them, is better still." "My lord, I did not intend to say that the objects of your benefactions were unworthy."

"One word more my old friend; Madame Georges, and the poor young girl I have confided to her, have set out from two extremes, to fall into one common abyss—misfortune. The one, happy, rich, loved, honoured, endowed with every virtue, has seen her life withered, broken, annihilated by the wicked hypocrite to whom blind parents had married her. I say it with joy, but for me, the poor woman would have expired with misery and want; for shame prevented her from applying to any one."

"Ah! my lord, when we arrived at that wretched hovel, what frightful poverty! horrible! And when, after her long illness she awoke, as it were, in this house, so calm, so quiet, what surprise! what gratitude! You are right, to see such unfortunate ones succoured; it makes one believe in God."

"It is by assisting them we honour God: I acknowledge nothing more celestial than virtue, calm and holy; nothing is more respectable than a woman like Madame Georges, who, educated by a pious and good mother in an intelligent observance of every duty, has never failed in them—and has valiantly passed through the most frightful trials. But is it not also honouring God, in that which is most holy, by dragging from the mire one of those rare beings whom he has pleased to endow? does she not also merit our pity, interest, respect? Yes, respect the poor child who, left to her own instinct; who, tortured, imprisoned, degraded, defiled, has in a holy manner preserved at the

bottom of her heart the noble germs that God himself has planted. If you had heard her, at the first word of interest that I expressed for her, at the first honest and friendly word she had ever heard, how the most charming instinct, tastes the most pure, thoughts the most delicate, the most poetic, were awakened in her ingenuous mind, just like spring, when the thousand wild flowers of the meadows unfold their blossoms at the least ray of the sun, without knowing why! I discovered in Fleur de Marie treasures of goodness, grace, and wisdom—yes, wisdom, my old Murphy. A smile came to my lip and a tear started to my eyes when, with her little prattling, filled with reason, she proved to me that I must economize forty sous each day to keep me from want and temptation. Poor little thing, she said all this with such a serious tono, so touching—she felt such satisfaction at giving me good advice, such sweet delight at hearing me promise that I would follow it—I was affected—oh! affected to tears; and I am accused of being hard, inflexible. Oh! no, no, thank God! sometimes I yet can feel my heart beat warm, and—But you, my friend, you are softened. Come, come, Fleur de Marie shall not be jealous of Madame Georges; you will interest yourself also in her fate."

"And, when I think that this child has a rich and honoured mother, as they say, who has shamefully abandoned her; oh, if this is so, I will know it, I hope—and I will tell you how. Oh, if it is so! woe, woe, to that woman! she will have a terrible expiation to make. Murphy, never have I felt such sensations of hatred as I feel when I think of this woman, whom I know not. You know, Murphy, there are certain vengeances dear to me—certain sufferings most precious—I have a thirst for certain tears."

"Alas, my lord," said Murphy, much afflicted at the stern expression of Rodolphe's countenance as he spoke these words, "I know it; those who merit your compassion and interest often say of you, 'He is an angel from heaven!' while those who deserve your contempt and hatred, cursing you in their despair, say, 'He is the devil!'"

"Hush! here is Madame Georges and Marie. Prepare everything for our departure; we must be at Paris early."

Retour de Marie au château

CHAPTER XIV.

THE PARTING.

MARIE, thanks to the care of Madame Georges, was no longer recognisable. A pretty little round peasant's hat, with two thick braids of blonde hair, half concealed her heavenly face; a kerchief of white muslin was crossed on her breast, and disappeared under the boddice of her apron of silk, whose lively colours formed a pleasing contrast to the Carmelite dress of fine wool, which appeared as if it had been made for her.

The expression of Marie was profoundly contemplative; there are certain joys which cause emotions of ineffable sadness, of melancholy the most holy.

Rodolphe was not surprised at the gravity of Marie; he expected it. Joyous and lively, he would have had a less exalted opinion of her. With perfect tact, he made her no compliments on her beauty, but he felt that there was something solemn, something holy, in this redemption of a being snatched from vice. On the serious and resigned countenance of Madame Georges could be seen traces of long suffering of profound grief; she looked at Marie with compassion, a benevolence almost maternal, so much were the sweetness and grace of the young girl sympathetic. "Here is my child," said she, presenting Marie to Rodolphe, "who comes to thank you for your goodness." At these words, "my child," she slowly turned her large eyes towards her protectress, and looked at her for some moments with an expression of gratitude quite indescribable. "I thank you for Marie, my dear Madame Georges; she is worthy of this tender interest. She will merit it always."

"Mr. Rodolphe," said Marie, in a voice trembling with emotion, "you understand, do you not, that I can find nothing to say to you?" "Your emotion tells me all, Marie." "Oh! she feels how much her happiness is providential," said Madame Georges, much affected. "Her first movement on entering my chamber, was to bend her knees before my crucifix."

"It was because—now, thanks to you, Mr. Rodolphe, I dare to pray," said Marie, looking at her friend.

Murphy turned suddenly away; his English Stoicism would not allow them to see how much he was touched by the simple words of Marie.

Rodolphe said, "My child, I have something to say to Madame Georges. My friend Murphy will conduct you over the farm, and will make you acquainted with your future protégées. We will join you directly. Well! Murphy, don't you hear me?"

The good man turned his back, and pretended to blow his nose with a most formidable noise; he then put his handkerchief into his pocket, pulled his hat over his eyes, and half turning round, offered his arm to Marie.

He had so skilfully manœuvered, that neither Rodolphe nor Madame Georges had perceived his face. Taking the arm of the young girl, he moved rapidly towards the buildings of the farm, walking so fast that, to keep up with him, Marie was obliged to run, as she had to run in her infancy after La Chouette.

"Well! Madame Georges, what do you think of Marie?" said Rodolphe. "Mr. Rodolphe, I have already told you, that hardly had she entered into my chamber, when, seeing my crucifix, she threw herself on her knees with a movement so spontaneous, so naturally religious, I cannot describe it; I saw in a moment that her mind was not degraded; and, besides, Mr. Rodolphe, in her expressions of gratitude to you, there is nothing exaggerated—all is sincere. One word more will prove to you how much this religious instinct is all-dominant. I said to her, 'You must have been very much astonished, very happy, when Mr. Rodolphe told you that you should remain here? what a profound impression it must have made!' 'Oh! yes,' she answered; 'when Mr. Rodolphe told me that, I do not know what passed through my mind at once; but I experienced that kind of religious content, that holy respect that I feel when I enter a church—when I could enter,' she added; 'for you know, Madame—' I did not let her finish, seeing her face covered with shame. 'I know, my child—and I will always call you my child, if you will permit me—I know you have suffered much; but God blesses those who love and those who fear him—those who have been unfortunate and those who repent.'"

"Well, Madame Georges, now I am doubly content with what I have done. This poor girl interests you. You will only have to sow and reap; you have divined well; her instincts are excellent."

"That which has touched me the most is, that she never allowed herself to ask me one question concerning you, for naturally her curiosity must be much excited. Struck with this delicacy, and wishing to try her, I said, 'You must be quite anxious to know

who your benefactor is?' 'I know it,' she answered, with a charming naïveté; 'he is called my Benefactor.'"

"Thus, then, you will love her? Excellent woman, her company will be a solace to you; she will occupy at least a small corner of your heart."

"Yes, I will interest myself for her, as I would have interested myself for him," said Madame Georges, in a heart-rending tone. Rodolphe took her hand: "Come, come, do not be discouraged yet; if your researches have been in vain, perhaps some day—" Madame Georges bowed her head sadly, and said, with bitterness, "My poor son would have been now twenty years old." "Say that he *is* twenty years old." "May God hear you and grant it!" "He will grant it, I really hope, for the best. Yesterday I went (but in vain) to look for a certain man called Bras-Rouge, who, I had been told, could possibly give me some account of your son. Coming from his house after a fight, I met this poor unfortunate child." "Alas! so much the better! your kindness for me put you in the way to succour another unfortunate."

"Besides, I have wished for a long time to explore these miserable regions, almost sure that there are some souls to be saved from old Satan, whom I amuse myself by thwarting often," added Rodolphe, smiling, "and from whom I sometimes snatch his best morsels. Then," he added, in a serious tone, "have you no news from Rochefort?" "None," said Madame Georges, in a low voice, and shuddering.

"So much the better! this monster has met death in the mud-banks, in endeavouring to escape. His description is published, and he is too formidable a villian that they should not have used every exertion to recover him, and as it is six months since he has disappeared from the gal—" Rodolphe stopped just as he was about to pronounce the word.

"From the galleys! oh! say it—from the galleys," cried the unhappy woman, in a voice almost wild. "The father of my son! Ah! if this unfortunate child lives yet—if, like me, he has not changed his name, what shame—and this is nothing yet. His father has perhaps kept his humble promise. Ah! Mr. Rodolphe, pardon me; but, notwithstanding your benefactions, I am yet very unhappy."

"Poor woman, calm yourself."

"Sometimes I have horrible alarms; I imagine that my husband

has escaped safe and sound from Rochefort; that he seeks to kill me, as perhaps he has killed my child; for what has he done with him?" "This is, indeed, an unfathomable mystery," said Rodolphe, gravely. "What interest could this wretch have in taking away your son? Some fifteen years ago he endeavoured to escape to some foreign country; so young a child would only embarrass his flight." "Alas! Mr. Rodolphe, when my husband" (the poor woman shuddered in pronouncing these words) was arrested on the frontiers and brought back to Paris, they permitted me to visit him in prison, he said to me these horrible words: 'I have carried off your child because you love him, and because, through him, I can force you to send me money, of which he shall profit or not, as it suits me; that is my business. Whether alive or dead, don't concern yourself; but if he lives, he shall be in good hands: you shall drink of the cup of shame for the son, as you have for the father.' Alas! a short time after my husband was condemned for life. Since that time, all the entreaties, the prayers, with which my letters were filled, have been in vain; I have learned nothing of the fate of my son. Ah, Mr. Rodolphe, my son! where is he at present? Those frightful words are constantly recurring to me: 'You shall drink of the cup of shame for the son, as you have for the father.'"

"But this would be atrocious, inexplicable; why try to corrupt the poor child? above all, why take him from you?" "I have told you, Mr. Rodolphe, to force me to send him money; although he had ruined me, I still had some resources left, but these were soon exhausted. Notwithstanding his baseness, I could not but think he would employ at least a part of this money for this poor child." "And has your son no mark—nothing by which he may be recognised?"

"None other than that which I have spoken of, Mr. Rodolphe; a small Saint Esprit sculptured in lapislazuli, fastened to his neck by a silver chain; this relic, was a gift from my mother, who had worn it from her childhood, and regarded it with great veneration. I had also worn it, and fastened it myself around the neck of my child. Alas! this talisman has lost its virtue."

"Who knows, good mother? God is all-powerful."

"It was providence who sent you to me!"

"Too late, my good Madame Georges, too late. I might have saved you from years of sorrow."

"Ah! Mr. Rodolphe, have you not loaded me with—"

"What? I have bought this farm; you have consented to serve me as agent, and, thanks to your excellent management, it produces me—"

"Produces you, my lord!" said Madame Georges, interrupting Rodolphe; "do I not pay over the proceeds to our good Abbé Laporte? And this sum, is it not, according to your orders, distributed as alms?"

"And is it not an excellent produce? But you have advised the excellent Abbé of my arrival, have you not? I want to recommend my protégée to him. Has he received my letter?" "Murphy carried it to him when he arrived this morning."

"In this letter I related to the good abbé the history of this poor child. I was not certain that I could come myself to-day: in this case, Murphy would have brought Marie to you." One of the boys of the farm interrupted this conversation, which took place in the garden. "Madame," he said, "the abbé awaits you." "Have the posthorses arrived, my boy?" asked Rodolphe. "Yes, sir; they are putting them to the carriage." Madame Georges, the abbé, and the people of the farm only knew the protector of Marie by the name of Rodolphe. The discretion of Murphy was impenetrable; so much care had he when before strangers never to call him by any other name than that of Mr. Rodolphe.

"I forgot to inform you, my dear Madame Georges," said Rodolphe, as they walked towards the house, "that Marie has, I think, a weak chest; misery and privations have injured her health. This morning, in the strong light, I was struck with her extreme paleness; although her cheeks were rosy, her eyes appeared to shine with a feverish expression. She will need great care." "Count upon me, Mr. Rodolphe. But, praised be God! there is nothing serious; at this age, country air, with quiet repose—she will soon improve."

"I think so myself. But never mind. I don't put great confidence in your country doctors. I will tell Murphy to bring here a skilful physician, who will prescribe the proper regimen. You will send me word from time to time how she gets on. When she becomes more quiet and composed, we will think of the future. Perhaps it will be better for her to remain always with you, if her conduct and character are agreeable to you." "It will be

my wish, Mr. Rodolphe. She will take the place of the child that I regret each day of my life."

"Well, let us hope for you, let us hope for her."

At the moment when they approached the house from the farm, Murphy and Marie came up from the other side. Marie was all delighted with her walk." Rodolphe called the attention of Madame Georges to the round red spots on the cheeks of the young girl, which formed such a striking contrast to the delicate whiteness of her skin. The worthy man, leaving the arm of Marie, came and whispered to Rodolphe, "This little girl has enchanted me. I do not know, now, which interests me the most, she or Madame Georges. I was a fool and a madman."

"Don't tear out your hair for that, old Murphy," said Rodolphe, smiling and squeezing his arm.

Madame Georges, leaning on the arm of Marie, entered with her into the little saloon, on the ground floor, where the Abbé Laporte awaited them.

Murphy went to make arrangements for their departure, and Madame Georges, Marie, Rodolphe, and the Abbé remained alone. Plain, but very comfortable, this little room was hung and furnished with chintz, like the rest of the house, exactly as Rodolphe had described it. A thick carpet covered the floor, a good fire blazed in the chimney, and two bouquets of *reines-marguerites*, placed in glass vases, spread their perfume throughout the apartment. Through the green blinds, half closed, could be seen the meadow, the little river, on the other side, the hill planted with chesnut-trees.

The Abbé Laporte, seated alongside the fire, was more than eighty years old; since the last days of the revolution he had officiated in this parish.

It is impossible to imagine anything more venerable than his appearance, more sweetly imposing than his withered countenance, pale, thin, and shaded by his long white hair, which fell from the collar of his cassock which was patched in many places, the Abbé preferring, as he said, to clothe two or three poor children with good warm clothing than to play the gallant.

The good Abbé was so old that his hands trembled; and there was something so touching in this movement, that when he raised them sometimes in speaking, one would have said he was giving his blessing. Rodolphe looked at Marie with in-

terest: if he had known her less, or rather, not imagined her thoughts, he would have been astonished to see her approach the Abbé with a serenity quite religious.

The admirable instinct of Marie had taught her that shame ceased where expiation and repentance commenced.

"Mr. l'Abbé," said Rodolphe, respectfully, "Madame Georges has consented to take charge of this young girl, for whom I demand your kindness and care.'

"She has the right, Sir, as all those have who come to us. The mercy of God is inexhaustible, my dear child: he has proved it, in not forsaking you in such sad trials. I know all," and he took the hand of Marie within his own trembling hands. "The generous man who has saved you, has realized these words of the Holy Scriptures: "The Lord is near those who cry unto him: he will ful fil the desires of those who fear him: he will listen to their petitions, he will save them.' Now, merit his goodness, by your conduct; you will always find me to encourage you, to sustain you, in the good way you have entered. You will have in Madame Georges an example every day—in me a faithful counseller. The Lord will finish his work."

"And I will pray for those who had pity on me, who brought me here, father,' said Marie, and by a movement quite involuntary, she threw herself at his feet: her emotion was deep, her sobs almost choked her. Madame Georges, Rodolphe, the Abbé, all were profoundly affected.

"Raise yourself, my child,' said the Abbé; "you will soon merit absolution from the great fault of which you have rather been the victim than culpable; to speak again with the prophet, 'The Lord sustains all those who are ready to fall, and raises all those who are cast down."

"Farewell, Marie," said Rodolphe, giving to her a small gold cross, fastened to a black velvet riband; "farewell, keep this cross as a remembrance of me; I have had engraved on it this morning the date of your deliverance—of your redemption. I will soon return to see you." Marie pressed the cross to her lips. At this moment, Murphy opened the door of the saloon: "Mr. Rodolphe, the horses are ready."

"Adieu, father: adieu my good Madame Georges. I recommend your child. Once more, farewell Marie." The venerable priest, leaning on the arm of Marie and Madame Georges

who sustained his tottering steps, went to the porch to see Rodolphe depart. The last rays of the setting sun shone out upon this interesting and melancholy group.

Rodolphe mounted into the carriage, Murphy seated himself at his side, and the horses started off at a gallop.

CHAPTER IX.

THE RENDEZVOUS.

The next morning, Rodolphe, still disguised as a workman, was to be seen at the door of a tavern called the Panier-Fleuri situated not far from the Barrière Bercy. At ten o'clock of the evening previous, the Chourineur had been exact at the appointed time and place.

It was then noon, and raining in torrents; the Seine, swollen by the almost continual rains, had attained a great height, and overflowed a part of the quay. Rodolphe, looking from time to time with great impatience on the side of the Barrière, at last descried at a distance a man and woman advancing, sheltered by an umbrella; it was La Chouette and the Brigand. These two persons were completely metamorphosed; the latter had abandoned his wretched clothes and his air of brutal ferocity: he wore a long surtout of green beaver cloth, and a round hat; his cravat and his shirt were of extreme whiteness. If it had not been for his ugliness, and the savage sparkling of his eye always sharp, and piercing, one would have taken this man, with his peaceable and confident gait, for an honest citizen. The Borgnesse also in her Sunday garb, wore a white hat, a large shawl of imitation cashmere, and carried in her hand a large wicker basket.

The rain having ceased for a moment, Rodolphe, surmounting the disgust that he felt at the sight of these wretches, walked straight up to them.

For the 'Argot' of the tapis-franc, the Brigand had substituted a language quite refined, which appeared the more horrible as it announced a cultivated mind, and contrasted with the sanguinary boastings of this monster.

As Rodolphe approached him, the Brigand saluted him profoundly, and La Chouette made a low curtsey. "Sir, your very

humble servant," said he: "delighted to make again your acquaintance, for the day before yesterday you deigned to bestow on me two blows with your fists, enough to stun a rhinoceros. But we will say no more about that now; it was a pleasantry on your part—I am sure a simple pleasantry—think no more about it; grave affairs bring us together again. I saw the Chourineur last night at eleven o'clock at the tapis-franc; I told him to meet us here this morning, if he wished to be our assistant; but he refuses decidedly." "You accept, then?" "If you please, sir, your name?" "Rodolphe."

"Mr. Rodolphe, we will enter into the Panier-Fleuri. Neither Madame nor myself have breakfasted. We will speak of our little affairs while we are breaking a crust."

"Willingly."

"However, we can talk as we are walking; you and the Chourineur, owe, without meaning to reproach you, some damages to my wife and me. You have made us lose more than two thousand francs. La Chouette had an appointment, near St. Ouen with a tall gentleman in mourning, who came to ask for you, the other night, at the tapis-franc; he proposed that amount if we would do something to you. But, Finette, go and choose a cabinet at the Panier-Fleuri, and order the breakfast; some cutlets, a morsel of veal, a salad, and two bottles of Beaune; we will join you."

La Chouette had not for a moment taken her eye from Rodolphe; she went in, after exchanging a rapid glance with her companion, who continued,

"I tell you, then, Mr. Rodolphe, that the Chourineur has 'edified' me about this proposition for the two thousand francs."

"What does that mean—'edify?'"

"It is true this language is a little too high-flown for you; I mean to say that the Chourineur has told me what the tall man in black wanted of you, with his two thousand francs." "Well, well." "It is not so well, young man; for, the Chourineur, having met La Chouette, yesterday morning, near Saint Ouen, never left her a moment, as soon as he saw the tall man in black arrive; so that he did not dare to come near her. It is, then, two thousand francs that you must put us in the way of getting, without counting the five hundred that we were to have received for a portfolio, that we were to return, but which otherwise we

should not have returned, after inspection of the papers, which appear to us to be of more value than that."

"It contains, then, papers of much value?"

"It contains papers which appear to me to be very curious, although the greater part are written in English, and which I keep here," said the brigand, striking the pocket of his surtout. On learning that he had about his person the papers he had stolen from Tom, Rodolphe was much gratified, as they were of the first importance to him. His instructions to the Chourineur had been on this account, to prevent Tom from approaching La Chouette; for she would keep the portfolio, and Rodolphe hoped that he would become the possessor.

"I take care of these papers as I would of my purse," said the Brigand; "for I have found out the address of this stranger, and, by some means or other, I will see him."

"We can make a trade, if you will; for, if our plot succeeds, I will buy those papers from you; I, who know the man—that will be better than your—"

"We will see—but let us return to business."

"Well, then, I have proposed a superb affair to the Chourineur; at first he accepted it, and then backed out."

"He always had singular ideas." "But, in declining, he observed to me, that if he didn't do it, that was no reason why others should not, and that you, doubtless, would lend me your aid."

"And may I know, without indiscretion, why you made an appointment with the Chourineur, yesterday, at Saint Ouen? that which procured him the advantage of meeting La Chouette? he was rather embarrassed how to answer that question." Rodolphe imperceptibly bit his lips; he however, answered, shrugging his shoulders, "I believe so, for I had only told him half of my project—you understand—not knowing whether he was quite decided." "It was more prudent." "So much the more prudent, as I had two strings to my bow." "Ah, bah! Certainly." "You are a man of precaution. You had, then, given a rendezvous to the Chourineur, at Saint Ouen, for—"

"The affair that I propose is very good, because the master of the house in question is in the country. All my fear was that he might return; to be perfectly sure, I said to myself, there is only one thing to do."

"That was to assure yourself that he was in the country."

"As you say. I set out, then, for Pierrefitte, where his country-house is. My cousin is servant there—do you understand?" "Perfectly, my boy. Well?"

"My cousin told me that her master would not return to Paris until the day after to-morrow."

"After to-morrow?" "Yes." "Very well. But I return to my question. Why did you agree to meet the Chourineur at Saint Ouen?" "You are not very cunning. What is the distance from Pierrefitte to Saint Ouen?"

"About a league." "And from Saint Ouen to Paris?" "The same." "Well! if I had found no one at Pierrefitte, that is to say, the house vacant, there would have been some good to be done there; not so good as at Paris, but passable; I would return to Saint Ouen to seek the Chourineur, who was waiting for me; from thence we could return to Pierrefitte by a cross-road that I know, and—" "I comprehend. If, on the contrary, the affair was to come off at Paris?" "We would reach the 'Barriér de l'Etoile' by the road of the Revolte, and from thence to the Allée des Veuves." "There is only one step; it is quite plain. At Saint Ouen, you had two strings to your bow; that was very adroit. Now I understand why the Chourineur was at Saint Ouen. So now we can say that the house in the Allée des Veuves will be uninhabited until after to-morrow."

"Uninhabited, except by the porter."

"Understood. And it is an advantageous operation."

"My cousin has spoken to me of sixty thousand francs, in gold, in the cabinet of her master." "And you know the rooms?" "Like my pocket: my cousin has lived there for a year; and it is from hearing her speak of the immense sums her master drew from time to time from the bank, to place them otherwise, that this idea came first into my head. As the porter is strong, I spoke about it to the Chourineur; after much persuasion he, at first, consented, but afterward drew back. However, he is not capable of selling a friend."

"No! he has some—but here we are. I do not know if you are like me, but the morning air has given me an appetite." La Chouette was on the sill of the door. "This way; this way," she cried; "I have ordered the breakfast." Rodolphe

wished that the Brigand should pass in first—he had his reasons—but the latter was so polite, so urgent, that he was obliged to precede him.

Before sitting down to table, the Brigand struck lightly on the floor and walls, so as to assure himself of their thickness. "We will have no need to speak very low," he said, "the wainscot is not thin; let them serve all at once, and we need not be interrupted in our conversation." The breakfast was then brought in by a servant of the inn; but before the door was closed, Rodolphe saw Murphy, seated in an adjoining cabinet. The chamber wherein passed the scene we are about to describe was long and narrow, and lighted by a window that looked into the street directly opposite the door. La Chouette sat with her back to this window; the Brigand was on one side of the table, and Rodolphe was on the other: as soon as the servant went out, the Brigand arose, took his plate, and seated himself at the side of Rodolphe, so as to completely conceal him from the door. "We can talk better," he said, "and we need not talk so loud." "And, besides, you wish to place yourself between the door and me, to prevent my going out," answered Rodolphe, boldly.

The Brigand made a sign in the affirmative; and then half drawing out of the pocket of his coat a long round stiletto, with a wooden handle, "Do you see that?" "Yes." "Notice to amateurs," said he, knitting his brows, with a significant gesture. "And look out for me. I have put a dagger in my man," added La Chouette.

Rodolphe, with great composure, put his hand under his blouse, and drew out a small double-barrelled pistol, which he showed to the Brigand, and then replaced it in his pocket.

"We are made to understand one another," said the Brigand, "but you don't exactly comprehend. I just suppose what is hardly probable. If any one should come to arrest me, whether you have set the trap for me or not—all the same—I'll stab you!" So saying, he cast a ferocious glance at Rodolphe.

"And I'll jump on him to assist you, Fourline," cried La Chouette. Rodolphe answered not a word, but he shrugged his shoulders and poured out a glass of wine, which he drank. This *sang froid* imposed upon the Brigand, and he said I only warn you."

"Well, well, put your skewer into your pocket, there are no

chickens here to be skewered. I am an old cock, and have good spurs, my man," said Rodolphe. "Now let us talk about business." "Let us do so, but don't say anything against my skewer; that makes no noise; it does not trouble any one." "Yes, and does its work very nice, don't it, Fourline?" added La Chouette.

"Apropos," said Rodolphe to La Chouette, "is it true that you know who are the parents of La Goualeuse?"

"My man has put into the portfolio of the tall man two letters which speak about this. But she shall never see them, the little vixen. I would rather tear out both her eyes with my own hands. Oh! when I catch her at the tapis-franc, her account shall be paid."

"Come, come! talking, all talk; yet business does not get on." "Can we talk before her?" asked Rodolphe. "With all confidence: she has been tried, and can be of great use to us in watching, getting information, receiving, selling, &c.; she has every quality for an excellent manager. Dear Finette!" added the Brigand, extending his hand to her, "you have no idea how many services she has rendered me. But take off your shawl, my dear, you may take cold when you go out; put your shawl along with your basket." La Chouette took off her shawl. Notwithstanding his presence of mind, and the command which he had over himself, Rodolphe was not able to control a movement of surprise in seeing, suspended by a silver ring to a heavy chain of mock gold, which the old woman had around her neck, a little Saint Esprit of lapislazuli, conforming in every respect to the description of the one worn by the son of Madame Georges, at the time of his abduction.

At this discovery, a sudden thought struck Rodolphe. According to the account of the Chourineur, the Brigand, in escaping from the galleys, six months back, had, by disfiguring and mutilating himself, evaded all the pursuits and researches of the police. It was also just six months since the husband of Madame Georges had made his escape, and no one knew what had become of him. From all this, he came to the conclusion that it was very possible that the Brigand and the husband of this unfortunate were one and the same person. One remembrance awakened another. Rodolphe also recalled to mind that Madame Georges, one day, in speaking of the arrest of her husband, had mentioned the Herculean resistance of the monster, so that he had nearly

made his escape. If the brigand was the husband of Madame Georges, he must know the fate of his son, besides, he had preserved in the portfolio of the stranger some papers relative to the birth of La Goualeuse, so that Rodolphe had new and grave reasons for persisting in his projects.

Happily, his preoccupation escaped the Brigand, who was very busy in helping La Chouette.

Rodolphe said to the Borgnesse, "Marbleu! you have a fine chain there." "Fine, but not dear" said the old woman laughing; "it is mock gold, which I keep until my dear man gives me a real one." "That will depend on the gentleman, Finette; if we make a good business—be easy." "It is astonishing how well it is imitated," said Rodolphe. "And at the end—what is it, then, the little blue thing?" "It is a present from my man, until he can give me a better, an't it Fourline?"

"You must take care of that, Finette, it is a talisman."

"A talisman?" said Rodolphe, carelessly. "You believe in talismans, do you? Where the devil did you get it? give me the address of the maker." "They don't make any more, my good sir: the shop is shut. Such as you see it, that jewel is of great antiquity—three generations. I think a great deal of it— it is a family tradition," he added, with a hideous smile; it is on that account that I have given it to Finette, to give her luck in all those enterprises in which she so worthily assists me. You shall see her work—you shall see her—if we make together some *commercial* operations. But to return to our business. You say, then, that in the Allée des Veuves—" "There is a house occupied by a rich man; he is called—" "I will not be so indiscreet as to ask you his name: there is, you say, sixty thousand francs in gold?" cried La Chouette. Rodolphe made a sign in the affirmative. "And you know all the rooms in the house?" said the Brigand. "Very well." "And the entrance, is it difficult?" "A wall of seven feet in height on the side of the Allée des Veuves, a garden and windows down to the ground," "And is there only one porter to guard all the treasure?" "Yes" "And what may be your plan of campaign, young man?" demanded the Brigand, carelessly. "It is very simple: climb over the wall, pick the lock of the door, or force the window shutters from without." "But if the porter should awake?" said the Brigand, looking steadily at Rodolphe. "That would be his own fault," said he,

with a significant gesture. "Well! does it suit you?" "You know I cannot answer you, without first examining the premises myself, that is to say, by the aid of my wife; but if all you have told me is true, it seems to me that we will take it right warm—to-night," said the villain, looking fixedly at Rodolphe. "To-night! Impossible," he answered coldly. "Why not? since the owner will not return until after to-morrow?" "Yes, but I cannot to-night." "Truly! Well, and I cannot to-morrow!" "For what reason?" "The same that prevents you from acting to-night," said the Brigand, chuckling. After a moment's reflection, Rodolphe replied, "Very well—good—let it be to-night. Where shall we meet?" "Meet! why we won't part," said the Brigand. "How!" "Why should we part? if the rain holds up a little, we will go and take a look at the Allée des Veuves; you will see how my wife can work. That done, we will return and play a game at piquet, and eat a mouthful in a cellar that I know of in the Champs Elysees, near the river: and as the Allée des Veuves is deserted very early, we will go there about ten o'clock." "I will rejoin you at nine o'clock then." "Do you want to do this job or not?" "Certainly." "Well, then, you must not leave us before this night; otherwise—" "Otherwise!" "I shall think you want to lay a snare for me, and it is on that account you want to leave me." "If I wished to lay a trap for you, what will hinder me laying it to-night?" "Every thing. You did not think that I would propose to act so soon. By not quitting us, you cannot inform any one." "Then you mistrust me?" "Infinitely; but as there may be some truth in what you have told me, and the half of sixty thousand francs is worth the trouble, I mean to try it: but to-night or never." "If you say never, I shall know how to hold myself respecting you, and I will serve you, in my turn, a dish of my cooking." "I will return your politeness, you may reckon on it." "All this is folly!" said La Chouette. "I think like my Fourline: either to-night or not at all." Rodolphe found himself in an anxious position: if he let this occasion escape of taking the Brigand, he perhaps would never find him again: henceforth on his guard, or perhaps recognised, arrested, and taken back to the galleys, he would carry with him those secrets which he had so much interest to discover. Trusting to chance, to his courage and address, he said to him, "I consent; we will not quit one another until to-night." "Then I am your man—and you shall

not repent. But it is now two o'clock; from hence to the Allée des Veuves is a great distance; it rains in torrents; pay the scot, and let us take a hack." "If we take a hack, I can first smoke a cigar." "Without doubt," said the Brigand; "Finette does not mind the smell of tobacco." "Well, I'll go and get the cigars," said Rodolphe, rising. "Do not give yourself the trouble," said he, stopping him; "Finette will go." Rodolphe reseated himself. The Brigand had imagined his design, and La Chouette went out. "What a good manager I have been," said he, complacently; "heiu! she would go through fire to serve me." "Speaking of fire, it is not very warm here," said Rodolphe, putting his hands under his blouse. Then, continuing the conversation, he took a pencil from the pocket of his waistcoat, and without being perceived he wrote some words in haste, taking care to place the letters wide apart, for he wrote without seeing. Having finished, the difficulty was to send it to its address. He arose, and walked to the window, and began to sing, keeping time with his fingers on the window. The Brigand came and looked through the window, and said to him, carelessly, "What are you playing there?" "I play, 'Thou shalt not have my rose!'"

"It is very pretty. I only wished to see if it had effect enough on any of the passers-by to induce them to stop and listen."

"I have no such pretensions." "You are wrong, young man, for you beat the glass as you would a drum."

At this moment Chouette came in with the cigars.

"It seems to me that it has stopped raining," said Rodolphe, lighting his cigar; "If we go and see the carriage ourselves, it will stretch our legs."

"What do you say? it does not rain any more? Are you blind?" said the Brigand. "Do you think I am going to expose Finette to the risk of taking cold? Risk her precious life, and spoil her fine new shawl?"

"You are right, my man; it is real dog's weather!"

"Well! the servant is coming. When we pay her, we will send her for a hack," answered Rodolphe. "Ah! now you talk like a sensible man." The servant entered, and Rodolphe gave her five francs. "Ah! sir, I cannot permit it; you are too kind," cried the Brigand. "Come, come, every one in his turn." "I submit, but on condition that I offer you something,

directly, at a little tavern in the Champs Elysées, which I know: a charming place." "Well, well, I accept." The servant being paid, they descended, and Rodolphe wished to pass behind, out of politeness for La Chouette; but the Brigand would not suffer it; he followed him closely, watching every movement. The people of the eating-house kept also a bar; among the many customers, a coachman, with his large hat drawn over his eyes, was paying his account when our party descended. Notwithstanding the close observance of the Brigand and La Chouette, Rodolphe, who went ahead, exchanged a rapid and imperceptible glance with Murphy.

The door of the hack was open; Rodolphe stopped, decided this time to get in last, as the coachman was slowly drawing near. In effect, La Chouette passed in first, but after many compliments, Rodolphe was obliged to follow, for the Brigand whispered in his ear, "You are determined, then, that I shall mistrust you?" Rodolphe mounted, the coachman advanced, to the door, and looked at Rodolphe with a surprised and troubled air. "Where do you want to go, Sir?" asked the coachman, Rodolphe answered in a loud voice, "Allée des—" "Des Acacias," cried the Brigand, interrupting him with a loud voice "we will pay you well, coachman."

"How the devil could you say where we are going before all those folks?" continued he. "Let all be discovered to-morrow! such words might betray us. Ah! young man, you are very imprudent!" Rodolphe answered, "True, I never thought of that; but with my cigar I am going to smoke you out; suppose we open one of the windows!" and joining the action to the word, he let drop without a small paper, nicely folded, the same he had written on under his blouse. The Brigand watched him so closely that, notwithstanding the immovable composure of Rodolphe, he could not but perceive a glance of triumph, for, putting his head out of the door, he cried to the coachman, "Whip behind! there is some one on the foot-board." Rodolphe shuddered, but he joined his cries to those of his companion; the coachman stood on his seat, and said, "No, no, citizen, there is no one there." "Parbleu! I want to be certain, just for curiosity's sake," answered he, jumping into the street. He saw no one, perceived nothing, so he thought himself mistaken. "You will laugh," said he, getting in; "I do not know why, but I thought some one was

following us." The carriage at this moment turned into a cross street, and disappeared. Murphy, who had not lost sight of it, and who had perceived the manœuvre of Rodolphe, ran and picked up the little note, which had lodged in a crack of the pavement. At the end of a quarter of an hour, the Brigand said to the coachman, "We have changed our mind: Place de la Magdeleine." Rodolphe looked at him in astonishment.

"Without doubt, young man, from this place one can go a thousand different ways. If we should get into trouble, the deposition of the coachman could do us no harm." At that moment, the hack approached the Barrière, a man of large stature, and of a very dark complexion, clothed in a long white surtout, having a hat drawn over his eyes, bent over the shoulders of a large and magnificent horse, and passed rapidly on at a hard trot.

"Fine horse, fine gentleman," said Rodolphe, leaning out of the window and following Murphy with his eyes, "what a pace he goes at! did you see him?"

"I'faith! he went by so quickly," said the Brigand, "I did not remark him. Rodolphe completely concealed his joy. Murphy had deciphered the note without a doubt. The Brigand, certain that the carriage was not followed, was entirely reassured, and wishing to imitate La Chouette, who was sleeping, or, rather, who pretended to sleep, said to Rodolphe,

"Pardon me, young man, but the movement of the carriage always produces a singular effect: it makes me sleep like a child."

The Brigand under the disguise of a feigned sleep wished to examine the features of his companion, to see if they betrayed any emotion.

Rodolphe, suspecting this, answered, "I got up early this morning, and I am very sleepy. I will do like you," and he shut his eyes.

Soon the deep breathing of the Brigand and La Chouette, who snored in unison, so completely deceived Rodolphe, that, believing his companions sound asleep, he half opened his eyes. The Brigand and La Chouette, notwithstanding their snores, had their eyes open, and were exchanging some mysterious signs, by means of their fingers, curiously placed on the palms of their hands. All at once this ceased. The Brigand, perceiving, with-

out doubt, that Rodolphe was not asleep, cried, laughing, "Ah! ah! comrade, you are, then, proving your friends?" "That ought not to surprise you, who snore with your eyes wide open." "I? oh, that's a different thing; I am a somnambulist."

The carriage stopped at the Place de la Magdeleine. The rain had for a moment ceased, but the clouds, driven by the violence of the winds, were so black, and low, that it was almost night. The trio turned their steps towards the Cours de la Reine; the Brigand said, "Young man, I have an idea—not a bad one—to assure myself that all you have said about the house in the Allée des Veuves is true." "Do you wish to go there now? that would awaken suspicions; and, besides, it is hardly four o'clock." "I am not such a fool as that! but I wonder why a man has a wife, whose name is Finette!" La Chouette raised her head proudly. "Do you see her young man? One would say she was a cavalry horse who had just heard the trumpet sound the charge." "You wish to send her there as a spy?" "Exactly." "No. 17, Allée des Veuves, is it not, my man?" cried La Chouette impatiently: "be easy; I have only one eye, but it is a good one." "Do you see, young man? She burns to be off at once." "If she manages to get into the house adroitly, I do not think your plan is a bad one. Take care of the umbrella, Fourline." "In half an hour I will be there, and you shall see that I know what to do," cried La Chouette. "Stop a moment, Finette: we will go into the Bleeding Heart. It is only two steps from here. If the little Tortillard is there, you can take him with you; he can remain at the door while you go in, and watch."

"You are right. He is as cunning as a fox, this little Tortillard; he is not ten years old, and it is he who the other—" a sign from the Brigand interrupted La Chouette.

"What does it mean—the 'Bleeding Heart?' A strange name for a tavern," said Rodolphe. "You must complain of it to the tavern-keeper." "What is his name?" "He does not ask the name of his guests." "Yes, but—" "Oh, you can call him just what you please: Peter, Thomas, Christopher, or Barnaby; he'll always answer. But here we are, and just in time, for the rain begins again; and the river, how grand it is—like a torrent—do look! Two days more of such weather, and the water will be over the arch of the bridge." "You say that we have arrived; where the devil is the tavern? I don't see any house

here!" "You don't look well around you." "Where do you want me to look?" "At your feet." "At my feet?" "Yes; look there! Can't you see the roof?"

Rodolphe had not perceived one of those subterranean taverns, that might have been seen a few years back, in certain parts of the Champs Elysées, especially near the Cours de la Reine.

A staircase, cut in the damp soil, led to a sort of ditch or area; one side, cut perpendicularly, supported by a sort of low, mean building with cracked walls; its roof of tiles covered with green moss, was hardly as high as the place where Rodolphe was standing; two or three hovels of worm-eaten wood, serving for sheds, storehouses, &c. were joined to this miserable dwelling. A very narrow passage, traversing the ditch through its whole length, led from the staircase to the door of the house; the remainder of the ground was covered with a sort of arbour, under which might be seen two rows of coarse tables firmly planted in the ground. The wretched tin sign, blown about by the wind, creaked sadly on its rusty hinges, and on it was painted a bleeding heart, pierced with an arrow. The post to which it was suspended reared its head high above this human kennel.

A heavy thick fog was now added to the rain, and the night was rapidly approaching. "What do you think of this hotel, young man?" asked the Brigand. "Thanks to the rain that has fallen for two days, it ought not to be too damp—there must be fine fishing. Come, let us descend." "Stop a moment; I must first find out if the landlord is there. Attention!" and rolling his tongue in a strange manner, he produced a singular cry, guttural and prolonged. A similar cry was returned from the house. "He is there," said the Brigand. "Pardon, young man! Respect to the ladies! Let Chouette go down first. I'll follow you. Take care you don't fall—it is very slippery.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE BLEEDING HEART.

The landlord of the 'BleedingHeart,' after having replied to the signal of the Brigand, civilly advanced to he door to receive him. This person, whom Rodolphe had sought for in the cité, and whom he did not yet know, was Bras-Rouge. Small and

slender, weak and feeble, this man was about fifty years of age; his weasel-shaped face, his sharp nose, his retreating chin, his bony cheeks, his little, sharp, sparkling, black eyes, gave to him an inimitable expression of cunning, artifice, and intelligence. An old wig, yellow as his bilious complexion, placed on the top of his skull, did not conceal his grisly locks; and he wore a round jacket, with a long, black apron, such as is usually worn by the waiters of the wine-cellars. Our trio had hardly descended the steps, when a little child of not more than ten years, but with a very cunning look, sickly, lame, and slightly humpbacked, came and joined Bras-Rouge, to whom there was such a resemblance, that at once he would be recognised as his son. He had the same penetrating, cunning look; his forehead was almost concealed by thick yellow hair, coarse and stiff as a mane; trousers of a maroon colour, and a grey blouse, fastened with a leather belt, completed the costume of Tortillard, so named in consequence of his deformity; he stood close alongside of his father, on his sound leg, like a heron on the borders of a swamp.

"Exactly! here is the urchin," said the Brigand: "Finette, the time is short, the night is coming. You must profit by the daylight that remains." "You are right, my man. I am going to ask his father for him." "Good-day, old man," said Bras-Rouge, addressing the Brigand in a sharp, false voice: "what can I do to serve you?" "I want you to lend your boy to my wife for a quarter of an hour. She has lost something near here: he will help her to find it."

Bras-Rouge winked his eye, and made a sign to the bandit, saying to his son, "Tortillard, follow Madame." This frightful child, attracted by the ugliness and by the wicked look of La Chouette, as other children are charmed by a good and benevolent expression of countenance, ran limping to take the hand of the Borgnesse. "My little love, come! There's a child for you," said Finette: "how it comes right to you: not like La Pegriotte, who always looked, as if she was sick at her stomach when she came near me, the little beggar." "Come, make haste, Finette! Open your eye and look sharp. I'll wait for you here." "It shan't be long. Go on ahead, Tortillard!" and the Borgnesse and the lame boy mounted the slippery staircase. "Finette, take your umbrella too," cried the Brigand. "It will only be in my way, my man," answered the old woman, as she disap-

peared with Tortillard in the fog, now fast thickening into night, and amid the hollow sighings of the wind, which agitated the dark branches, and despoiled the tall elms of the Champs Elysées.

"Let us enter," said Rodolphe, bowing his head as he passed through the door of the tavern. It was divided into two apartments; in the one was a bar and a billiard-table in bad condition; in the other, tables and garden chairs that had once been green. Two narrow windows with small panes, covered with spider webs, hardly lighted these rooms, whose green walls were saturated with humidity.

Rodolphe was left alone for a moment, while the two worthies had time for a few words and some mysterious signs.

"You will take a glass of beer or brandy while we are waiting for Finette?" said the Brigand. "No! I am not thirsty." "Every one to his liking. For myself, I'll drink a glass of brandy," added he, seating himself at one of the small tables in the second room. It was getting so dark that it was impossible to see, in one of the corners of the room, the open entrance to one of the cellars, which was descended by steps, with two folding doors, one of which was left open for convenience of access.

The table by which he had seated himself was quite near this hole, to which he turned his back, in this manner concealing it from Rodolphe. The latter looked through the windows for occupation, and to conceal his anxiety. The sight of Murphy walking quickly towards the Allée des Veuves, did not altogether reassure him, for he feared he had not altogether been able to decipher his mysterious note. More than ever he trembled for fear of losing this opportunity of possessing the secrets he was so anxious to discover, and which he had so much interest to know. Although he was very vigorous, very resolute, and well armed, he had to struggle in cunning with a murderer capable of doing anything. Such was the energetic temper of his disposition, so singular, so eager for violent and strong emotions, that Rodolphe found a sort of terrible charm in his inquietudes, and in the obstacles which had frustrated the plans he had laid the evening before with his faithful Murphy and the Chourineur. However, not willing that he should be mistrusted, he came and seated himself at the table, and asked for a glass of wine.

Bras-Rouge since he had exchanged the few words with the

Brigand, regarded Rodolphe with mistrust and defiance. "My advice, young man, is," said the Brigand, "that if my wife tells us the people we want to see are at home, we go and make them a visit at eight o'clock." "That will be too early by two hours," said Rodolphe; "It would incommode them." "Do you think so?" "I am sure of it." "Bah! among friends? Shouldn't stand upon ceremony." "I know them; and I repeat we must not go before ten o'clock." "How headstrong you are, young man!" "It is my idea; and may the devil burn me if I stir from hence before ten o'clock." "Don't trouble yourself; I never shut up my establishment until midnight," said Bras-Rouge in his shrill voice; "It is just the time my best customers come, and my neighbours don't complain of any noise that is made here." "I must consent to everything that you say, young man," said the Brigand.

"So be it; we will make our visit at ten o'clock."

"Here is La Chouette," said Bras-Rouge, hearing and answering a cry similar to that made by the Brigand on arriving at this tavern. She entered alone, saying, "All right; understood." Bras-Rouge discreetly retired without asking after Tortillard, whom he probably did not yet expect to see. The garments of the old woman were streaming with water. She seated herself opposite Rodolphe and the Brigand. "Well?" said he. "This young man has told the truth so far." "Ah! do you see?" cried Rodolphe. "Let La Chouette tell her story, young man. Come, go on, Finette."

"I arrived at No. 17, leaving Tortillard concealed in a hole to watch. It was still light. I rang at a little low door—hinges on the outside—two inches of daylight under the sill—in short, nothing else. I rang, the porter opened it. He is a large stout man, of of about fifty, with a sleepy, good humoured look, red whiskers, and bald head. Before I rang, I had put my cap in my pocket, so that I might appear to be one of the neighbours. As soon as I saw him, I began to weep bitterly, saying that I had lost my parrot, Cocotte, a little bird that I adored. That I lived in the avenue Morbeuf, and that I had pursued my favourite from garden to garden. Finally, I begged him to let me look for my pet in his garden." "Hem!" said the Brigand, pointing to La Chouette with an air of proud satisfaction; "what a woman!" "It is very adroit," said Rodolphe; "but what then?" "The

porter allowed me to look for my bird, and I ran all over the garden, crying, 'Cocotte! Cocotte!' looking in the air and on all sides, so as to see every thing. Within the walls, trellises on every side, a real staircase; at the corner of the wall there is a pine-tree, cut like a ladder; a woman *enceinte* could descend with ease. The house has six windows on the ground floor; there is no upper story; and there are four air holes to the cellar, without iron bars. The windows are all closed with shutters, fastened below. Staple above; push it down, and draw the wire."

"An't worth a rush," said the Brigand; "all is open."

La Chouette continued.

"The door glazed—two blinds without." "A memorandum," said the Brigand. "It is exact, just as if I could see it," cried Rodolphe. "On the left there is a well," continued La Chouette. "The rope may be of use, because on that side there are no trellises, if retreat should be cut off, on the side of the door as you enter the house." "Did you enter the house?" "She did, young man," said the Brigand with pride.

"Certainly I entered. Not finding Cocotte, I groaned as if I was quite exhausted, and asked permission of the porter to seat myself on the steps. The good man asked me to enter, and offered me a glass of wine and water. 'A simple glass of water,' said I 'my good sir.' He then asked me to enter into the antechamber; carpeted all over, good precaution; footsteps can't be heard, nor smashing of windows, if it should be necessary to break a pane; to the right and left doors with common locks; can almost open them by blowing. At the end, a strong door, locked; had the look of a chest; it smelt of silver. I had my wax in my basket." "She had her wax young man! She never goes without her wax!" said the Brigand.

Chouette continued. "I wanted to get near that door, so I pretended to be taken with a violent cough, so violent, that I was forced to lean against the wall. Hearing me cough, the porter said, 'I will go and get a bit of sugar.' He probably had to get a spoon, for I heard the rattling of silver. Silver in the right-hand room: don't forget that, Fourline. Finally, what with coughing, and groaning, I reached the door. I had the wax in the palm of my hand, and I leaned against the lock, as if it were nothing. Here is the print; if it don't answer for to-day, it will for another time; and now you can tell us if it is the door of the chest."

"Exactly! that is where the money is," answered Rodolphe.

"But *all* the money is not there!" cried La Chouette, her green eye twinkling. "In approaching the window, still pretending to look for Cocotte, I saw in one of the rooms, at the left of the door, bags of dollars on a bureau. I saw them as plain as I see you, my man. There were at least a dozen."

"Where was Tortillard?" said the Brigand, roughly.

"He was all the while in his hole, two steps from the door of the garden. He sees in the dark like a cat. There is no other entrance. When we go there, he can tell us if any one has come." "It is good.'

Hardly had he pronounced these words, when the Brigand threw himself suddenly on Rodolphe, caught him by the throat, and threw him backward into the cellar, which was open, behind the table. This attack was so sudden, so unexpected, so vigorous, that Rodolphe was not able to foresee or prevent it. La Chouette, frightened, gave a loud scream. She had not, at once, seen the result of this attack. As soon as the noise of the falling body had ceased, the Brigand, who was perfectly acquainted with the subterranean apartments of the house, descended slowly into the cellar, listening with attention. "Fourline, take care!" cried La Borgnesse, leaning over the opening. "Draw your dirk." The Brigand did not reply, but disappeared. At first nothing was heard: but after a few moments, the distant noise of a door, grating on its rusty hinges, sounded heavily through the cellar, and then again all was still. The obscurity was complete. La Chouette, rummaging in her basket, struck a light from a lucifer match, which, applied to a small candle, spread its sickly rays around the gloomy room.

At this moment the horrid figure of the Brigand appeared at the opening of the trap. La Chouette was not able to restrain an exclamation of affright at the sight of his pale, mutilated face, with eyes almost phosphorescent, which seemed to crawl on the ground in the midst of the darkness, which the feeble glimmer of the candle hardly dispelled. Scarcely recovered from her emotion, the old woman cried, with a kind of humble flattery, "You must, indeed, look frightful; for you made *me* afraid—Me!"

"Quick! quick! to the Allée des Veuves," said the Brigand, shutting the cellar doors, and fastening them with a bar of iron. "In an hour it will be too late!"

CHAPTER XVII.

THE CELLAR.

Rodolphe fainted from the effects of the blow, and fell almost lifeless at the foot of the staircase. The Brigand dragging him to the entrance of a second cellar, which was much deeper, pushed him in, and closed the door, which was very thick, and fastened with iron; after which he rejoined La Chouette, to go with her to commit a robbery, perhaps a murder, in the Allée des Veuves. In about an hour Rodolphe came to himself, and found that he was lying on the ground, amid the most profound darkness. Stretching out his arms, he felt the stone steps; and finding his feet were cold and wet, he moved them, and perceived that they were immersed in a pool of water. With a violent effort he succeeded in seating himself on the lowest step of the staircase, and as he slowly recovered from his fainting fit, he found that happily none of his limbs were fractured. He listened. He heard nothing—nothing but a sort of dripping, dull, faint, but continual. At first he did not suspect the cause, but as he came more to himself, the surprise to which he had been a victim, all the circumstances came slowly to his recollection. He felt the water now over his ankles. He comprehended, at length, his situation. The swelling of the Seine was formidable, and this place was beneath the level of the river. His danger recalled Rodolphe to himself. Quick as a flash he mounted the damp staircase, and, arrived at the top, he threw himself against the door. In vain he tried to move it; immovable and firm with its bars of iron, his efforts were fruitless. In this desperate situation his first thought was about Murphy. "If he is not on his guard, this monster will assassinate him. It is I," cried he, "who will have caused his death. Poor Murphy!"

This cruel thought augmented the strength of Rodolphe. Supporting himself on his feet, and bending his shoulders, he exhausted himself in vain efforts to move the door. Hoping to find some lever or instrument in the cave, he descended the steps. Two or three round elastic bodies ran from his feet: they were rats, which the water had driven from their holes. He groped about, but found nothing. The water was now to the height of his knees; so he returned to the staircase, in a state of unut-

terable despair. He counted the steps; there were thirteen; and three were already submerged.

Thirteen! fatal number! In certain positions the strongest minds are not free from superstition; Rodolphe saw in this number a bad omen. The fate of Murphy returned to his mind, and he sought in vain for some opening, between the ground and the door, which was doubtless swollen by the dampness; his efforts were unavailing.

Rodolphe then, in despair, shouted at the top of his voice, with the faint hope that he might be heard by some of the frequenters of the tavern. He listened: nought was heard but the noise of the dripping water, continual—always mounting—mounting! He then seated himself on the topmost step, his thoughts always recurring to the situation of Murphy, who, perhaps, at that moment was dying under the assassin's knife. Bitterly he regretted his bold and imprudent projects, although their motive was generous. He recalled to his mind the thousand proofs of the devotion of Murphy, who, rich and honoured, had left his wife and child, his dearest interests, to follow him in the valiant but strange penance which he had imposed on himself.

The water continued to rise: but five steps remained dry. In rising and standing near the door, his head touched the top of the vault; he could calculate how long his agony would last. His death would be slow, silent, frightful. He thought of his pistol; at the risk of wounding himself, he could fire at the door, and perhaps break it down; but alas! in his fall this arm had been lost, or carried off by the Brigand. If it had not been for his fears for Murphy, Rodolphe had awaited death with serenity. He had lived long; he had been ardently loved; he had done a great deal of good; he could have wished to do more. God knew it! He did not murmur against his fate, he saw in it a just punishment for a fatal action, not yet expiated; his ideas were exalted, purified by this danger: but a new torment came to augment the horrors of his position, and to try his resignation.

The rats, driven by the water, had fled from step to step, in vain trying to escape. Finding it difficult to hold on by the walls, they caught hold of the garments of Rodolphe. When he felt them swarming about him, his disgust, his horror, were inexpressible. He tried to drive them away; bnt cold and sharp bites imbrued his hands with blood. In his fall his vest and

blouse had been torn open: he felt on his naked breast the touch of icy paws; and as often as he tore them off and threw them at a distance they would return swimming. Again, again he shouted: no one heard him. In a few moments his cries would cease; the water was up to his neck, and now would soon cover his mouth. Pure air began to fail; the first symptoms of apoplexy attacked Rodolphe; the arteries of his temples began to beat with violence; his head swam—he was about to die. He gave one last thought to Murphy, and raised his prayer to God, not that he would deliver him from punishment, but that he would accept his sufferings.

At this awful moment, on the point of quitting not only all that made life desirable, brilliant, envied, but also a title almost royal, *a sovereign power;* forced to renounce an enterprize which, in satisfying two of his fondest natural impulses, *the love of the good and hatred of the wicked*, he might one day have counted on an expiation of his faults; about perishing by a horrible death Rodolphe had not for a moment one feeling of anger or useless phrenzy, during which a feeble mind would accuse or curse, in turn, man, fate, and God. No: as long as his mind remained clear, Rodolphe supported his fate with submission, and resignation. When his faculties were obscured by agony, when absolutely delivered to vital and natural impulses, he struggled physically, but not morally against death. His consciousness was almost lost; the water bubbled around his ears; the last ray of reason was about leaving him for ever, when hurried steps, and a noise of voices resounded above the door of the cellar. Hope animated his dying strength; and he could just hear these words, the last he could comprehend:"

"You see there is nobody here.

"Thunder! it is true," answered sadly the voice of the Chourineur, and the footsteps retreated.

Rodolphe, annihilated, could sustain himself no longer; he slipped from the staircase.

Suddenly the door of the cellar was opened from without; the water flowed out like a sluice, and the Chourineur could just seize the two arms of Rodolphe, who, half drowned, had, with a convulsive movement, clung to the sill of the doorway.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE AWKWARD NURSE.

SNATCHED from a certain death by the Chourineur, and carried to the house in the Allée des Veuves, Rodolphe was placed in bed, in a chamber comfortably furnished. A large fire blazed in the fireplace, a lamp placed on a commode spread a clear light through the apartment; the bed of Rodolphe was surrounded by thick curtains of green damask, which concealed its occupant from the light.

A negro of middling size, with a white, woolly head, clothed with great neatness, and wearing an orange and green riband at the button-hole of his blue coat, held in his hand a gold minute watch, which he seemed to consult as he counted with his right hand the pulse of Rodolphe: sad and pensive, he regarded his patient with the most profound solicitude. The Chourineur, clothed in rags, covered with mud, remained immovable at the foot of the bed, with his arms crossed; his red, shaggy beard was dripping with water; and his hard and bronzed features wore an ineffable expression of pity and interest. Hardly daring to breathe he watched the contemplative attitude of the doctor, and seemed to draw from it an ill omen; and he muttered to himself in a low tone, "who could think, to see him weak and feeble as he is, that he could have ever given me such blows on my head. It won't be long before he recovers his strength, will it, doctor? I'faith, I wish he could beat his convalesence on my back; it would do him good, wouldn't it, doctor?"

The black made a slight sign with his hand. "Give me the potion." The Chourineur, who had left his nailed shoes at the door, went towards the commode, stepping lightly on the end of his toes, but with such contortions of his body, such balancings of his arms, such swellings of his back and shoulders, that under any other circumstances would have been highly ludicrous. The poor devil seemed as if he wished to throw all his weight on that part of himself that did not touch the floor; which, however, notwithstanding the carpet, did not prevent the floor from groaning under his weight. Unluckily, in his ardour to do well, and from fear of letting the glass vial fall, he squeezed it so tight in his large hands that it was broken, and its contents spilled upon the

carpet. At the sight of this mishap, the Chourineur remained immovable, one of his large legs being in the air, the toes nervously contracted, looking alternately in a confused manner at the doctor and at the neck of the bottle which remained in his hand. "What a devil of an awkward fellow!" cried the negro impatiently. "Thunder or a fool!" added the Chourineur, apostrophizing himself.

"Ah!" said the Esculapius, looking at the commode, "fortunately you took the wrong bottle. I want the other one."

"The little red one?" asked the unfortunate nurse.

"To be sure: there is no other." The Chourineur, in turning on his heels, according to his old military habits, crushed the remains of the vial: tender feet would have been cruelly wounded, but our friend, thanks to his profession, had a pair of natural sandals, hard as the hoof of a horse. "Take care, you will hurt yourself," cried the physician. The Chourineur paid not the least attention to this advice. Profoundly occupied with his new mission, which he wished to execute skilfully, to make up for his first awkwardness, one should have seen with what delicacy, with what agility, and care, he took hold of the frail glass with his two fingers. A butterfly could not have left an atom of the golden dust of its wings between the forefinger and thumb of the Chourineur. The black doctor shuddered at this excess of precaution, happily without cause. The Chourineur, in approaching the bed, again stepped on the broken glass.

"Do you wish to lame yourself?" said the doctor, in a low voice. The Chourineur looked at him with surprise. "What! lame myself, doctor?" "Yes, twice you have stepped on the broken glass." "Oh! if that is all, never mind. I have the soles of my feet lined with leather." "A small spoon," said the doctor. The Chourineur recommenced his sylphlike movements, and brought what the doctor had demanded.

After some spoonfuls of this potion, Rodolphe made a slight movement, and moved his hands. "Good! good! He is aroused from his torpor," said the doctor. "The bleeding has saved him: he will soon be out of danger."

"Saved? Bravo! Vive la Charte!" cried the Chourineur, in the explosion of his joy. "But you must be quiet!" "Yes, doctor." "The pulse improves, wonderfully!" "And the poor friend of Mr. Rodolphe, doctor? Thunder! when he knows, happily

that—" "Silence!" "Yes, doctor." "Take a seat." "But, doctor—" "Take a seat. You worry me by moving around me; it disturbs me. Come, take a seat!" "Doctor, I am as dirty as a bunch of floating faggots that one is about to—I should soil the furniture." "Then sit on the floor." "I should spoil the carpet." "Do as you please; but in the name of Heaven remain quiet," said the doctor, in a tone of impatience; and seating himself in an arm chair, he leaned his head on his hands.

After a moment of profound thought, the Chourineur, less on account of his fatigue than to obey the doctor, took hold of a chair with the greatest precaution, and turned it upside down with a perfectly satisfied and assured air, intending to seat himself modestly on the back spokes, so as to soil nothing. Unfortunately, quite unacquainted with the laws of gravity, as he sat down the chair overturned. The unfortunate man, with an involuntary movement, stretched out his hand, and overturned a stand on which was a salver with cups and saucers.

At this formidable noise, the black doctor sprang from his chair; and Rodolphe, also awakening with a start, sat up in bed, looked around with anxiety, and asked, "Where is Murphy?"

"Be assured, your highness," said the black, respectfully, "there is hope."

"Was he wounded?" cried Rodolphe.

"Alas! yes, my lord." "Where is he? I wish to see him," said he, trying to raise himself: but he fell from pain and exhaustion.

"Let me be carried at once to Murphy, since I am unable to walk!" cried he. "My lord, he is now sleeping: it would be dangerous to cause him any emotion." "Ah! you deceive me; he is dead! He is murdered! and it is I—I who am the cause;" cried Rodolphe, raising his hands towards heaven.

"My lord knows I am incapable of telling a falsehood. I affirm, on my honour, that Mr. Murphy is living—very badly wounded, it is true; but the chances of his cure are almost certain." "You tell me this to prepare me for some frightful news. He is doubtless in a desperate state!" "My lord—" "I am sure of it. You deceive me. I must be carried to him, at once; the sight of a friend will do him good." "Once more, my lord, I affirm on my honour that unless something unforseen should arise, Mr. Murphy will soon be convalescent."

"The truth, the whole truth, my dear David?"

"The whole truth, my Lord." "Listen, you know my regard for you. Since you have belonged to my house you have always had my confidence. Never have I doubted your great skill; but for the love of Heaven, if a consultation is necessary—" "That was my first thought my lord; but at present it is useless, you can believe me. And besides, I did not wish to introduce strangers here before knowing if your orders of yesterday—"

"But how did all this happen?" said Rodolphe, interrupting him. "Who took me from the cellar where I was drowning? I have a confused recollection of having heard the voice of the Chourineur: was I mistaken?"

"No, no! this brave man can tell you all about it, my lord, he has done all."

"But where is he? where is he?" The doctor looked round for the awkward nurse, who, confused at his fall, had hidden himself behind the curtain of the bed.

"There he is," cried the doctor, "he looks quite confused." "Come here, my good fellow!" said Rodolphe, stretching out his hand to his preserver.

CHAPTER XIX.

STORY OF THE CHOURINEUR.

The confusion of the Chourineur was so much the more profound, as he heard the black doctor call Rodolphe *My Lord*, several times. "But draw near and give me your hand," said Rodolphe. "Pardon, Sir—no I mean to say my Lord; but—" "Call me Rodolphe, as before; I like it better." "And for me also, I shall feel more easy. But excuse my hand, I have done much work since—" and he put out timidly his black and bony hand. Rodolphe pressed it cordially. "Come," said he, "sit down and tell me all. How did you discover the cellar?—But, on reflection, the Brigand?"

"Is here in safety," said the black physician. "Tied like two bunches of tobacco he and La Chouette. From the pretty faces they make, when they look at each other, they must cordially hate one another just now." "And my poor Murphy! my God! and I only think of it just now! David, where is he wounded?" "In the right side, my lord; happily towards the last false rib."

"Oh! I must have terrible revenge! David, I count on you." "My lord knows that I am his, body and soul," answered the black, coldly. "But how did you arrive in time, my good fellow?" said Rodolphe to the Chourineur. "If you will, my lord —no, Mr. Rodolphe, I will begin at the beginning." "You are right: I listen."

"You know that last night you said, after you had returned from the country, where you had been with the poor Goualeuse, 'Try to find the Brigand in the city: tell him that you know of some good affair, that you do not wish to have anything to do with it; but that if he wishes to take your place, he has only to go to-morrow (this morning) to the Barriére Bercy, at the Panier-Fleuri, and there he will find some one who can give farther information.' Very well, in leaving you I ran to the cité. I went to the Ogresse: no Brigand there. I walked through the streets of Saint-Eloi aux Fêves, and the Vieille Draperie: nobody there. Finally I caught him with that screw of a Chouette at the Parvis de Nôtre Dame, at the house of a little tailor, pawnbroker, receiver, or thief. They wanted to make a dash with the money they had stolen from the tall man in mourning, who wished to do something with you. La Chouette was cheapening a red shawl—the old monster! I told my business to the Brigand; he said it suited him, and he would be at the rendezvous. Good. This morning according to your order, I came here to give you the answer. You said, 'My lad, return to-morrow before light. You shall pass the day here, and at night you shall see something worth your trouble.' You said no more; but I understood. I said to myself, 'This is something got up to play a trick on the Brigand to-morrow morning: holding out a bait. He is an old villain: he killed the cattle-merchant. I am in for it.'"

"And my error was, not to have told you all. This frightful evil would not, perhaps, have happened." "That regards you, Mr. Rodolphe. That which concerns me was to serve you; because, I don't know why, I have told you I feel myself your bulldog." "Well, enough." "I said to myself then, 'To-morrow shall be a holyday; to day I had leave. Mr. Rodolphe has paid me for the two days I have lost, and two others in advance; for do you see? here are three days that I have not been to my masters'; and not being a millionaire, labour is my bread.' I added, Stop, it is right; Mr. Rodolphe pays me for my time; my time belongs

to him. I'll go and employ it for him. The thought gave me this idea: 'The Brigand is cunning; he will no doubt fear a trap. Mr. Rodolphe will propose to him something for to-morrow, it is true; but the fellow is capable of coming here in the daytime to reconnoitre; and if he is at all suspicious, to bring along with him another robber, or to say "agreed" for to-morrow, and to do the job on his own account to-day.'

"You have wisely imagined. Just so it happened, and Providence has willed that I should owe my life to you." "It is astonishing, Mr. Rodolphe, how, since I have known you, things have happened to me, that appear to have been contrived up yonder! and that I have had thoughts I never had before, since you said to me, 'You have yet a heart and honour.' Heart! honour! Thunder! these words appear to stir up something inside. Ah! Mr. Rodolphe, when one is accustomed to hear the cry of mad dog! if he wishes to approach honest people—"

"So you have had thoughts that are new to you?"

"Surely, Mr. Rodolphe. 'Stop,' said I to myself again. 'Now if I should know some one who had done a bad action; drink—anger—no matter what, I would say to him, 'My man, you have done wrong:' good. But this is not all: it is not for the King of Prussia, that the Divinity makes a man who may drown himself or starve with hunger. Come, let us be friends: if you make forty sous a day, give twenty to some poor old souls, or to little children; to any one who may be more unfortunate than you are, who has neither bread nor strength; and, above all, don't forget, my man, that if there is some one to be saved at the risk of your hide, it is your business! If you do, and you begin again your bad tricks, you will always find me.—' But I ask pardon, Mr. Rodolphe, I am talking away—and you are curious to know—" "No; I like to hear you talk thus. And, besides, I shall know too soon how this horrible affair has happened, to which my poor Murphy has fallen a victim. I felt sure that I should not leave the Brigand for a moment during this dangerous enterprise. Then he should have killed me a thousand times before he touched Murphy. Alas! fate has decided otherwise. Continue my good fellow."

"Willing, then, to employ my time for you, I said, I must go and hide myself in some place, where I can see the walls and the garden door; that is the only entrance. If I find a snug

corner—it rains—I'll remain all day, all night, and to-morrow morning I shall be at hand." It was about two o'clock, when I said that to myself, 'aux Batignolles,' where I went to eat a mouthful. After leaving you, Mr. Rodolphe, I returned to the Champs Elysées. I looked out of my nest. What do I see? A little tavern only ten steps from the door. I took possession of the lower floor, and seated myself near a window. I ordered some nuts and some drink saying, I expected some friends: a humpback, and a tall woman, it was quite likely. From my place I had a complete view of your door. It rained tremenduously; no one passed—night came."

"But," said Rodolphe, interrupting the Chourineur, "why did you not go to my house?"

"You told me to come the next morning, Mr. Rodolphe. I did not dare to come sooner. It would have looked like skulking.— After all, I am what I am, a liberated galley-slave; and when any one is with me, as you are, Mr. Rodolphe, one must only go to him, when he says, "Come." After that, if I should see a spider on the collar of your coat, I'd take him off, and crush him without asking your permission: you undertsand? So I was then at the window, cracking my nuts, and drinking my wine, when through the fog, whom should I see but La Chouette, with the son of Bras-Rouge, little Tortillard!"

"Bras-Rouge? is he then the keeper of the tavern in the Champs Elysées?" cried Rodolphe. "Yes, sir: did you not know it?" "No. I thought he lived in the cité." "He lives there also; he lives everywhere. Bras-Rouge is a cunning and proud fellow, with his yellow wig and pointed nose! To go on when I saw Chouette and Tortillard, I said, 'Good; it begins to grow warm! Tortillard hid himself in one of the ditches of the alley, right opposite your door, just as if he was getting shelter from the rain: he was on the watch. La Chouette took off her bonnet, put it in her pocket, and rang at the door. Poor Murphy, your friend, came and opened it; and she went throwing about her arms, and running about the garden. I would have given my tongue to the dogs, I thought, if I could only find out what La Chouette wanted. Finally, she came out, put on her cap, said two words to Tortillard, who went back to his hole, and cleared out. I reflected a minute: 'Don't get perplexed. Tortillard is come with La Chouette: the Brigand and Mr. Rodolphe are there

at Bras-Rouge's.'" "Well, after that!" "La Chouette has come to spy; the affair will then come off to-night? They will do it to-night. Mr. Rodolphe thinks it will take place to-morrow. He is then betrayed?" "Well!"

"'Mr. Rodolphe is done for. I must go to Bras-Rouge's. I'll see what it all means. Yes; but if during this time the Brigand should come? It is night, it is true: so much the worse. I'll go and say to Murphy. "Look out." Yes, but that little vermin of a Tortillard is near the door. He'll hear me ring: he'll see me: he'll give La Chouette warning. If she returns, that will spoil all. And besides, perhaps Mr. Rodolphe has arranged for to-night. Thunder, these yeas and nays made my brain whirl. I was confounded. I could see nothing but fire. I did not know what to do. I said, 'I'll go out; perhaps the fresh air will assist me.' It did assist me. I took off my blouse and cravat, and went straight to the burrow of Tortillard. I took the wretch by the back of the neck: he kicked, and scratched, and squalled, I tell you. I wrapped him in my blouse, making a bag of it, by tying one end with the sleeves, and the other with my cravat, and just leaving room enough to breathe: I took the packet under my arm, and seeing near by a sort of garden very marshy, surrounded by a low wall, I threw Tortillard in the middle of a bed of carrots. He grunted like a pig, but at two steps off he could not be heard. I started off; It was time! I climbed up one of the large trees of the alley, just opposite your door, over the hiding place of Tortillard. Ten minutes after, I heard steps; all the time raining cats and dogs. It was so dark—so dark that the devil would have stepped on his own tail. I listened: it was La Chouette. 'Tortillard! Tortillard!' whispered she. 'Yes, look for him, your Tortillard.' 'It rains, and the boy has got tired of waiting,' swore the Brigand: 'if I catch him, he'll take a scorching'. 'Fourline, take care, answered La Chouette. Perhaps he has gone to tell us something: if it should be a trap? He did'nt want to do it until ten o'clock.' 'That's just the reason,' answered the Brigand: 'it is now only seven. You have seen money; who risks nothing, nothing gains. Give me the pincers and the cold chisel.'" "These instruments?" asked Rodolphe.

"They came from Bras-Rouge's. Oh, he has a house well furnished. In a moment, the door is forced. 'Remain there,' said the Brigand to La Chouette. 'Look out, and cry. "Take

care," if you hear any thing.' 'Put your dirk in your button-hole, so as to have it handy,' said La Borgnesse, as the Brigand entered the garden. I thought at once, 'Mr. Rodolphe is not here; he is dead, or he is living at this moment. I can do nothing for him; but the friends of our friend are ours.' Oh, no! pardon, my lord!"

"Go on! Well?" "I said, the 'brigand may murder Murphy, the friend of Mr. Rodolphe, who expects no danger.' It was then I began to get warm. I jumped from the tree, and pounced upon La Chouette. I silenced her with two blows of the fist—choice ones. She fell without a whimper. I ran into the garden. Thunder! Mr. Rodolphe, it was too late. Poor Murphy! Hearing the noise at the door, he had, doubtless, come out of the vestibule, and closing with the brigand, they rolled together down the steps. Already wounded, he kept himself firm, and did not cry for help. 'Brave man! he is like the good dogs, which bite with their teeth, and not with the mouth,' as I said to myself. I pitched right into the affray, catching hold of the brigand by one leg; it was the only disposable part for the moment. 'Vive la Charte! It is I! the Chourineur! the Chourineur! Room for two, Mr. Murphy!' 'Ah! villain! where do you come from?' cried the brigand, alarmed at this. 'Don't be so curious,' I answered, squeezing his leg between my knees, and clipping one of his wings. It was the one with the poniard—the good one. 'Eh! Mr. Rodolphe!' cried Murphy, helping me all he could.

"Brave, excellent man! murmured Rodolphe, sadly."

"'I know nothing about him,' I answered. 'This scoundrel, perhaps, has killed him.' And I hugged the Brigand tighter, for he was trying to stick me with his skewer; but as I was lying with my breast on his arm, he had only his fist clear. 'You are, then, alone,' I said to Murphy, as we still struggled with the villain. 'There are others near at hand, but they cannot hear us cry.' 'Shout for help; there may be some one passing.' 'No; since we have got him, we must keep him here; but I feel weak; I am wounded,' said Murphy. 'Thunder! go, then, and seek for assistance, if you are able. I will try to hold him. Take away his knife; help me to get well on him, and if he were ten times as strong, I'd hold him.' The Brigand said nothing, but you could hear him blow like an ox. But, thunder!

what efforts! Murphy could not get the knife out of his hands; the fist of that man is like a vice. Finally, by bearing with all my might on his right arm, I got my arms around his neck, just as if I wished to embrace him. To crook him in that manner, was the height of my ambition. Then I said to Murphy, 'make haste; I'll wait for you. If you have one too many, let him pick up La Chouette, behind the door of the garden, I have stunned her.' I remained alone with the Brigand. He knew what he had to expect."

"He did not know it! nor you, my good fellow," said Rodolphe, with a gloomy look, his features contracted with that hard, almost ferocious expression, of which we have spoken.

The Chourineur, astonished, said to Rodolphe, "I thought that I knew what he had to expect, for, thunder! it was not to brag. But there was one moment, when I was not at a wedding. We were half on the ground, half on the last step of the porch. I had my arms around his neck; cheek against cheek. I could hear his teeth grind. It was dark;—raining all the while; but the lamp remaining in the vestibule gave us a faint light. I had one of his legs between mine. Notwithstanding, his muscles were so strong, that he would raise us both a foot from the ground. He tried to bite, but he could not. Never did I feel so strong. Thunder! my heart beat, but in the right place. I said, 'I am like a person holding a mad dog to prevent him from biting everybody.' 'Let me go, and I will do nothing to you,' said he. 'Ah! you're a coward,' cried I; 'your courage is only in your strength; you would not have dared to kill the cattle merchant of Poissy, if he had been as strong as I am; hem!' 'No,' said he; 'but I am going to kill you, like him!' Saying this, he made such a quick and violent movement, that he succeeded in throwing me off; but I kept my hold around his neck; his right arm under me. His legs once free, he made good use of them. It gave him hope; he turned me half over; and if I had not held on to the sword arm; it was all up with me; finished. At this moment my left hand gave out; I was obliged to loosen my fingers. That spoiled all. I said to myself, 'I am under; he will kill me. Never mind; I'd rather be in my place than his. Mr. Rodolphe told me that I had courage and honour; I felt it was true. I was just thinking, when I saw La Chouette on the step, with her round eye, and her red shawl.

Thunder! I thought I had the nightmare. 'Finette!' cried the Brigand, 'I have dropped my knife! pick it up—there, there; under him; and strike—in the back—between the shoulders.' 'Wait; wait, Fourline, until I look.' And there was La Chouette, turning, and turning, like a bird of ill omen, as she is. At last, she saw the poniard, and sprang to get it. I was flat on my belly, and fetched her such a kick, with my heel, in her stomach, as to upset her; but she soon raised herself and fell upon me. I could do no more; I clung, still to the neck of the Brigand; but he gave me such blows in my mouth, that I was about to give up; I began to be faint; when I saw three or four fine fellows, well armed, running down the steps, and Murphy, very pale, and supported by the physician. They seized the Brigand and La Chouette, and secured them. That was not all. I wanted Mr. Rodolphe. I jumped on La Chouette. I remembered the tooth of the poor Goualeuse; and, catching hold of her arm, gave it a twist, saying, 'Where is Mr. Rodolphe?' She held quiet. At the second twist, she cried, 'At Bras-Rouge's; in the cellar of the "Bleeding Heart."' Good. In passing, I stopped to pick up Tortillard from his carroty bed; it was all in my road. I looked—there was nothing left but my blouse; he had gnawed it with his teeth. I reached the 'Bleeding Heart.' I jumped at the throat of Bras-Rouge. 'Where is the young man who came here with the Brigand?' 'Don't squeeze so hard, and I will tell you. They wanted to play a trick upon him, and shut him in my cellar; we will go and let him out.' We descended; no one there. 'He must have gone out, when my back was turned,' said Bras-Rouge; 'you see there is no one there.' I was about going sadly away, when, by the light of the lantern, I saw another door. I opened it, and received a famous 'jet d'eau' right in my face. I saw your two poor arms in the air. I fished you out, and brought you here on my back, as there was no one to go and call a coach. That's all, Mr. Rodolphe, and I can say, without boasting, that I am most proudly content."

"My dear fellow, I owe you my life. It is a debt; and I will pay it, be assured, in many ways. You have so much heart, that you will partake of the sentiments which inspire me at this hour. I feel a fearful inquietude for the friend whom you have so bravely defended; a thirst for vengeance against him, who had so

nearly killed you both." "I can comprehend that, Mr. Rodolphe. To jump on you like a thief, throw you into a cellar so you might drown; the Brigand merits his fate. He acknowledged to me, that he killed the cattle merchant. I am no coward, but, thunder! I would go now, willingly, to call the guard, to take this brigand!" "David, will you go and see how Murphy is?" said Rodolphe, without replying to the Chourineur; "you can then return." The black went out.

"Do you know where the Brigand is, my fine fellow?" "No; do you want to let him go? Ah! Mr. Rodolphe, no such generosity. I repeat what I have said; 'he is a mad dog; look out, passers by.'" "He never shall bite any one again, be assured." "You are going to shut him up somewhere?" "No; in half an hour he shall go hence." "The Brigand?" "Yes." "Without gendarmes?" "Yes." "How? shall he go out free?" "Free." "And all alone?" "Yes; all alone. He shall go where he likes," said Rodolphe, interrupting the Chourineur, with a smile that terrified him. The black returned. "Well, David—and Murphy?" "He sleeps, my lord," said the physician, sadly; "the respiration is quite oppressed." "There is still danger!" "His situation is very serious, my lord. However, we must hope." "Oh, Murphy! vengeance; vengeance!" cried Rodolphe. "David, one word;" and he whispered in the ear of the black. He trembled. "You hesitate!" said Rodolphe to him; "I have often mentioned this thing to you. The moment to make the application is come." "I do not hesitate, my lord. I approve of this idea. Without enumerating the crimes which sent this brigand to the galleys for life, he has committed three murders; the cattle merchant, Murphy, and yourself. It is justice." "He will still have before him, the horizon without end, of repentance," added Rodolphe; "well, David, you understand me?" "We act in concurrence, my lord." After a moment's silence, Rodolphe added, "You think five thousand francs will answer, David?" "Perfectly, my lord." "My dear man," said Rodolphe to the amazed Chourineur, "I have two words to say to this gentleman; in the mean time, go into the adjoining room; you will find a large red portfolio on a bureau; take out of it five thousand francs, and bring them to me."

"And for whom are these five thousand francs?" said the Chourineur, involuntarily.

"For the Brigand; and, at the same time, you can tell them to bring him hither."

CHAPTER XX.

THE PUNISHMENT.

The scene is changed to a room hung with red, and brilliantly lighted. Rodolphe, in a long dressing-gown of black velvet, which increased the pallor of his face, is seated before a large table covered with cloth. On this table are seen two portfolios, the one which was stolen from Tom by the Brigand in the city, and which was the property of the Brigand; the chain of La Chouette, to which was suspended the little "Saint Esprit," in lapis-lazuli; the poniard, still bloody, which had stabbed Murphy; the iron pincers, which had been used to break open the doors; and, finally, the five thousand francs which the Chourineur had brought from the adjoining room.

The black doctor is seated on one side of the table, the Chourineur at the other. The Brigand, strongly bound, so that it was impossible to stir, was placed in a large arm-chair, on wheels, in the middle of the room. No one else was present. Rodolphe is no longer irritable; he is calm and collected; he is about to accomplish a solemn and formidable mission.

The doctor is pensive. The Chourineur cannot take his eyes from Rodolphe; a vague fear oppresses him. The Brigand is livid; he is afraid.

A legal arrest, perhaps, had appeared less formidable. His audacity would not have forsaken him before an ordinary tribunal; but everything that now surrounded him surprised, alarmed him. He is in the power of Rodolphe, whom he had considered as a man capable of betraying him, when about to commit a crime, and whom he had wished to sacrifice to this suspicion, with the hope of profiting, alone, in the robbery. Now, Rodolphe appeared to him as terrible and imposing as justice itself.

The most profound silence reigned without. Nothing could be heard but the rain falling and dripping from the roof on the pavement. Rodolphe addresses the Brigand: "Escaped from the galleys of Rochefort, where you were condemned for life, for the crimes of forgery, robbery, and murder; you are Anselmo Duresnel?"

"It is false! Let it be proved!" said the Brigand, in an altered voice, looking around him with a disturbed air. "How!" cried the Chourineur: "were we not together at Rochefort?" Rodolphe made a sign to the Chourineur to remain quiet, and he continued: "You are Anselmo Duresnel: you will acknowledge it by and by. You have murdered and robbed a cattle merchant on the road to Poissy?" "It is false!" "You will confess it directly." The Brigand looked at Rodolphe with surprise. "This night you have broken into this house to rob; you have stabbed the master of the house."

"You proposed the robbery to me, yourself," said the Brigand, recovering slightly, his assurance; "I was attacked, and I defended myself." "The man you stabbed did not attack you. He was without arms. I proposed this to you, it is true. I will tell you directly, for what purpose. The evening previous, after having stolen a pocket-book from a man and woman in the city, which pocket-book is now before you, you offered to kill me for one thousand francs!" "I heard it," cried the Chourineur. The Brigand cast on him a look of savage hatred. Rodolphe continued: "You see, there was no need of your being tempted by me to do evil." "You are not a magistrate, and I will not answer." "Now, I will tell you why I proposed this robbery. I knew you had escaped from the galleys. You knew the parents of an unfortunate being, whose misfortunes were caused by your accomplice, La Chouette. I wished to get you here under the pretence of a robbery, the only means by which I could get you to come. Once here, I would have given you your choice, either to be delivered into the hands of justice, who would make you pay, with the loss of your head, for the murder of the cattle merchant—" "It is false; I am not the man." "Or to be conducted out of France, by my care, to a place of perpetual seclusion; but on the condition that you gave me the information I required. You have been condemned for life—you have escaped from prison. By taking you, by preventing in future, the possibility of your doing harm, I would serve the world at large, and by your confessions I should find the means, perhaps, to restore to her family a poor creature, more unfortunate than culpable. Such was, at first, my project. It was not legal; but by your escape and new crimes, you are without the law. Yesterday, a providential revelation taught me your true name."

"It is false! my name is not Duresnel!"

Rodolphe took from the table the chain of La Chouette, and showing to the Brigand the little "Saint Esprit" of lapis-lazuli. "Sacrilege," said he. "You have given to a miserable, infamous creature, this holy relic! three times holy—for your child had this pious gift from his mother and grandmother!" The Brigand, stupified at this discovery, hung his head without answering. "Yesterday, I learned that, fifteen years since, you took your son from his mother, and that you, alone, possess the secret of his existence. This new crime was another motive for me to entrap you, without speaking of what is personal. It is not that which I revenge. This night you have again spilled blood without any provocation. The man whom you have assassinated came to you in confidence, not suspecting your murderous intent. He asked you what you wanted. 'Your money and your life!'—and you struck him with your poniard." "Such was the story of Murphy, when I came to his assistance," said the doctor. "It is false! he lied!" "Murphy never lies," said Rodolphe, coldly. "Your crimes demand an extraordinary reparation. You have broken into this garden with arms in your hands. You have stabbed a man, in order to steal. You have committed another murder. You must die here. In compassion to your wife and son, I will spare you the shame of the scaffold. It will be supposed that you have fallen in your murderous attempt. Prepare yourself; the arms are charged."

The countenance of Rodolphe was implacable.

The Brigand had remarked, in the adjoining apartment, two armed men, with carbines. His name was known, and he thought, in effect, that he was about to die, so that his family should be saved from this new shame. Like his fellows, this man was as cowardly as he was ferocious. Believing his last hour was come, he shook convulsively; his lips became blanched; with a suffocating voice, he cried "Pardon!" "There is no pardon for you," said Rodolphe. "If your brains are not blown out here, the scaffold awaits you." "I prefer the scaffold. I can live two or three months more. What difference can it make to you if I shall be punished a little later? Mercy! Mercy!" "But your wife—your son—they bear your name!" "My name is already dishonoured. Oh! if I could only live eight days! Mercy!"

"Not even that contempt of life, which is often found among great criminals!" said Rodolphe, with disgust."

"Besides, the *law* forbids any one to take it in their own hand, cried the Brigand, with assurance. "The law!" cried Rodolphe; "the law! You dare to invoke the law; you, who for twenty years have lived in open violation of all law?" The brigand cast down his head without replying, and then said, in a tone much more humble, "Then for pity! let me live!" "Will you tell me where your son is?" "Yes, yes; I'll tell you all I know about him." "Will you tell me who are the relations of this young girl, who, in her childhood, was so tortured by La Chouette?" "There are papers in my portfolio that can give you some information. It seems that her mother is a great lady." "Where is your son?" "You will let me live" "Confess all first." "That is when you know all—" said the Brigand, hesitatingly.—"You have killed him!" "I confided him to one of my accomplices, who, when I was arrested, was able to escape." "What has he done with him?" "He has brought him up; he has given him an education, so that he could enter into business—so that he could serve us. But I will not tell you any more unless you promise not to kill me." "Do you make conditions, miserable creature?" "Well! No, no; but pity! have me arrested only for the crime of to day; do not speak of the others. Leave me a chance to save my head!" "You wish, then, to live?" "Oh, yes; yes; who knows? No one can say what may happen," said the Brigand, involuntarily. He already thought of a new flight, a new escape. "You wish, then, to live at any price—to live."

"But to live, even if in chains. One month—for eight days—oh! not to die at once." "Confess all your crimes, and you shall live." "I shall live? Oh! truly, I shall live?"

"Listen; in pity to your wife, your child, I wish to give you good advice. Die to day; die!" "Oh, no; no; do not take back your promise; let me live! Life the most frightful, the most hideous, anything but death." "You wish it?" "Oh, yes, yes!" "And your son; what have you done with him?" "This friend, of whom I have spoken, had him taught book-keeping, so as to get him a situation in a bank, in order that he might keep us advised—of certain matters. This was agreed between us. Although at Rochefort, and always thinking about my escape, I directed all the plans; we corresponded in cipher."

"This man frightens me," cried Rodolphe, shuddering; "he knows crimes I never suspected. Acknowledge; why did you wish to place your son at a bankers?" "For—you understand —being in concert with us—to inspire confidence in the banker —to aid us—and—" "Oh! my God! her son, her son?" cried Rodolphe, concealing his face in his hands.

"But we didn't intend any forgery!" cried the brigand; "and besides, when it was revealed to my son what was expected, he refused. After a violent scene with the person who had brought him up, he disappeared. It is more than eighteen months since. We do not know what has become of him. You will see, there, in my portfolio, how he has been sought after, for fear we should be denounced; but all traces of him have been lost in Paris. The last house he dwelt in was in the Rue du Temple, under the name of François Germain; the address is also in my portfolio. You see, I have told all. Keep your promise! have me arrested, only for the business of to-night." "And the cattle merchant of Poissy?" "It is impossible that can be discovered, there are no proofs. I can acknowledge it before you, to show my good-will; but before the judge I will deny it." "You avow it, then." "I was in great distress; I did not know how to live. La Chouette was my counsellor. Now, I repent, you see, since I acknowledge it. Ah! if you were only generous enough not to deliver me to justice, I would give you my word of honour not to begin again." "You shall live, and I will not deliver you to justice." "You pardon me?" cried the Brigand, not believing what he heard; "you pardon me?" "I judge you and I punish you!" cried Rodolphe, in a voice of thunder. "I will not deliver you to justice, because you will go to the scaffold or the galleys; that must not be; no, it must not be. To the galleys! to rule again by your strength and your villany? to satisfy, again, your brutal instincts of oppression? to be abhorred, feared by all; for crime has its pride, and you rejoiced in your monstrosity. To the galleys? no, no; your iron body defies the labour of the yard, and the rod of the sergeant; and, besides, chains can be broken, walls pulled down, ramparts scaled; and some day, you will again escape, to cast yourself, anew, on society, like a savage wild beast, márking your way with rapine and murder; for nothing can resist your Herculean strength, nothing is out of reach of your knife; that must not be—no,

that must not be! since, at the galleys, you would break your chain. To secure one from your madness, what must be done? deliver you to the executioner?" "But is it my death, then, that you wish?" cried the brigand; "is it my death?"

"Death! don't hope for it; you are too cowardly! you fear it so much, that you could never believe it imminent! In your desire to live, in your obstinate hopes, you would escape the agonies of its formidable approach! Foolish, senseless hope! But it is of no consequence; it will veil the expiatory honours of the punishment; you will never believe, until you are under the hands of the executioner! And then, stupified with terror, you will be but a senseless mass of mortality; an offering to the manes of your victims. This cannot be—you would believe you would be saved, until the last moment. You, monster—hope? How! you dare to think that hope can shed its balmy influences over you? Oh! it is too much! even Satan would laugh. I do not mean you to hope any more in this life—I—"

"But what have I done to this man? who is he? what does he wish with me? where am I?" cried the Brigand, almost in a state of delirium.

Rodolphe continued: "If, on the contrary, you had braved death, even then you ought not to be delivered to justice. For you, the scaffold would only be a bloody stage, where, like many others, you would make a parade of your ferocity; or, tired of your miserable life, you would damn your soul with a final blasphemy! That must not be, neither. It is not good for the people to see the condemned jest with the executioner, bully the hangman, blow out the divine spark, which God has given us, with scorn and contempt. There is something holy in the welfare of a soul. 'Every crime can be expiated and forgiven,' says the Saviour, but only to those who have sincerely repented. From the tribunal to the scaffold—the distance is too short. You must not die thus." The Brigand was horror-struck. For the first time in his life he found there was something to be feared worse than death. This vague fear was horrible.

The black doctor and the Chourineur looked at Rodolphe with anguish; they listened, with shuddering, to his voice, deep, harrowing, merciless, cutting like a sword. Rodolphe continued: "Anselmo Duresnel, you, then, shall not go to the galleys; you shall not die."

"But what do you want with me? it is hell that sends you here!"

"Listen," said Rodolphe, rising, in a solemn manner; "you have criminally abused your strength; I will paralyze it. The strongest have trembled before you—you shall tremble before the weakest. Assassin! you have plunged the creatures of God into eternal darkness; the shadows of eternity shall commence for you in this life—to-night—directly; your punishment, at length, will equal your crimes; this frightful punishment will leave you at the horizon of expiation, without end. I should be as criminal as you are, if, in punishing you, I only satisfied a vengeance, however just it might be. Far from being barren, like death, your chastisement ought to produce good fruit; far from damning you; perhaps it will reform you. If, to put you in a condition where you can do no harm, I shut you out for ever from the splendours of creation: if I plunge you into an impenetrable night alone, with the remembrance of your misdeeds, it is that you may meditate incessantly on their enormities. Yes! for ever isolated from the exterior world, you will be forced always to look within yourself; and then, I hope that your forehead, bronzed by infamy, will blush with shame; your heart hardened by ferocity, corroded by crime, will be softened by commiseration. Each one of your words is blasphemous; each one will become a prayer. You are bold and cruel, because you are strong; you shall be lowly and humble, because you shall be weak. You are a stranger to repentance; some day you will weep for your victims. You have degraded the understanding that God has placed within you: you have reduced it to thoughts of rapine and murder; from a man you have made yourself a wild beast; some day your understanding will be chastened by remorse, and raised by expiation. You have not even respected that which is respected by the wild beasts, their females and their young. After a long life, consecrated to the redemption of your crimes, your last prayer will be to supplicate God to grant you the unhoped-for happiness to die between your wife and your son." As he pronounced these last words, Rodolphe was visibly affected.

The Brigand felt hardly any more fear; he thought that Rodolphe was only alarming him by this lecture on morality. Almost reassured by the soft voice of his judge, the Brigand, now the

more insolent, as he was less alarmed, said, with a coarse laugh, "Ah! are we playing at charades? or are we at catechism here?" The black looked at Rodolphe with inquietude: he expected an explosion of anger on his part. But it was not so. The young man hung his head, with an ineffable expression of sorrow, and said to the doctor, "Do it, David. May God punish me alone if I am deceived," and he concealed his face in his hands.

At these words, "Do it," the negro rang the bell. Two men, clothed in black, entered. With a sign, the doctor showed them the door of a side cabinet. The two men rolled the chair on which the Brigand was tied into this room. "Tie his head to the back of the chair with a handkerchief, and place another one over his mouth," said the black doctor, without entering the apartment.

"You are going to strangle me now?" cried the Brigand! "pardon! and—" Then nothing was heard but a confused murmur. The two men reappeared, and at a sign from the black, retired. "My lord!" said the doctor once more to Rodolphe, in an interrogative manner. "Do it," answered Rodolphe, without changing his position. David entered slowly into the cabinet. "Mr. Rodolphe, I am afraid," said the Chourineur, pale and trembling. "Mr. Rodolphe, speak to me, then, I am afraid: is it a dream? What is the negro going to do with him? Mr. Rodolphe, I hear nothing—it makes me still more afraid—"

David came out of the cabinet; he was pale as negroes are; his lips were white. He again rang: the two men came in. "Bring back the chair!" It was done. "Take off the bandage!" It was taken off. "You mean, then, to put me to the rack?" cried the Brigand, with a tone of anger rather than grief. "Why did you amuse yourself by pricking my eyes thus? You hurt me; is it to torment me again that you have put all the lights out here, as within?" There was a moment of frightful silence. "You are blind," said David, in a mournful tone.

"It is not true; it is not possible! You have made it dark expressly," cried the Brigand, making violent efforts to release himself. "Take off his bands: let him rise, let him walk," said Rodolphe. It was done; he raised himself quickly, made one step with his hands before him, then fell back in the chair, lifting his arms to heaven.

"David, give him this portfolio," said Rodolphe.

The negro put in his trembling hands a pocket-book.

"There is in this pocket-book a sum sufficient to secure you an asylum and bread to the end of your days in some solitude. Now you are free: go and repent: the Lord is merciful." "Blind!" repeated the Brigand, holding mechanically the portfolio in his hand. "Open the doors, let him go!" said Rodolphe. The doors were opened with a loud crash.

"Blind! blind!" repeated the horror-stricken bandit. "My God! my God! it is, then true!"

"You are free—you have money—go!"

"But I can't go—I—what do you wish me to do? I can't see!" cried he in a voice of despair. "But it is a frightful crime to take advantage of one's strength, for—"

"It is a crime, is it?" repeated Rodolphe, in a solemn tone. "And you, what have you done with your strength?" "Oh, death! Yes, I should have preferred death!" cried the Brigand "To be at the mercy of the world; to fear every one; a child could beat me now; what can I do? My God? What can I do?" "You have money." "They will steal it from me!" said the Brigand.

"They will rob you! Do you hear these words—you say it with fear— you are a robber? go, go." "For the love of God," said the Brigand, in a supplicating manner, "let some one conduct me. How can I go into the streets? Ah, kill me! I ask you, for pity's sake, kill me!" "No, one day you will repent." "Never; I will never repent! Oh, I will revenge myself!" and grinding his teeth with rage, he jumped out of the chair with clenched fists and a menacing air; and the first step he stumbled and fell. "No, no, I cannot; and yet I am so strong. Ah, I am much to be pitied; no one will pity me; no one!" And he wept.

It is impossible to paint the stupor and affright of the Chourineur during this terrible scene: his rude and rough features expressed compassion; he approached Rodolphe, and said in a low voice, "Sir, he has perhaps received what he deserved, for he was an infamous villain. He wanted to kill me just now; but never mind; now he is blind, he weeps. Thunder! it makes me feel ill. He can't see to walk—he may be crushed in the streets. Will you let me conduct him to some place where he can be quiet, at least?" "Good," said Rodolphe, touched with this generosity, and taking his hand; "good; go!" The Chourineur approached the Brigand, and placed his hand on his shoulder. The Brigand

trembled. "Who touched me?" said he, in a mournful tone. "I—" "Who are you?" "The Chourineur." "You come to revenge yourself also?" "You cannot see how to go out? take my arm—I will conduct you." "You—you?" "Yes; now, come." "You wish to spread a snare for me?" "You know I am not a scoundrel—that I will not take advantage of your misfortune. Come; let us go—it is daylight." "Daylight! Ah! I shall never see daylight again. I—never—" Rodolphe could no longer support the scene; he went in, followed by David, making signs to the servants to retire. The Chourineur and the Brigand remained alone. "Is it true there is money in the portfolio he gave me?" asked the Brigand, after a long silence. "Yes. I put there myself five thousand francs: with that you can go and board somewhere—in some corner of the country, for the rest of your days; or would you rather go to the Ogresse?" "No! she would rob me." "To Bras-Rouge?" "He would poison me, to steal my money." "Where, then, shall I take you?" "I don't know. You are not a robber, Chourineur. Here, conceal my portfolio in my vest, so that La Chouette can't see it; she would soon empty it." "La Chouette? they have carried her to the hospital of Beaujou. In struggling with you last night, I broke one of her legs." "But what is to become of me? With this black curtain always before me! and if on this black curtain I should see appear the pale faces and the dead who—"

He shuddered, and said to the Chourineur, "This man—of last night, is he dead?" "No." "So much the better;" and after remaining for some moments silent, he cried, with a new access of rage,

"It is you, Chourineur, who has caused all this! Brigand! if it had not been for you, I should have killed the man, and carried off the money. If I am blind, it is your fault—yes, it is your fault!"

"Don't think any more about that—it does you no good: will you come or not? I am tired—I want to sleep—I have had holyday enough now. To-morrow I shall return to my work—I will take you where you wish to go; afterward I will go to bed."

"But I don't know where to go—to my lodgings? I dare not—it must be said—"

"Well, listen. Will you come for a day or two to my lodgings? I will look out for some kind folks, who, not knowing who

you are, will take you for a boarder, as an unfortunate blind man. Stop—there is a man I know at the Port St. Nicholas, whose mother lives at St. Mandé; a worthy woman, who is poor; perhaps—she will take care of you. Come, now—yes or no?" "I believe I can rely on you, Chourineur. I am not afraid to go with you—with my money. You have never stolen—you are not a bad man—you are generous." "Come, that is good—no more epitaphs—enough." "I am only grateful for what you wish to do for me, Chourineur. You are without hatred, and without ill-will," said the Brigand with humility; "you are a much better man than I am." "Thunder! I think so. Mr. Rodolphe said I had a heart." "But who is this man, then—he is not a man!" cried the Brigand, with renewed rage; "he is an executioner—a monster!" The Chourineur shrugged his shoulders, and said, "Let us go!" "We shall go to your room Chourineur?" "Yes." "You have no ill-feeling towards me for this night's work? You swear it, don't you?" "Yes." "And you are sure he is not dead. —*the man?*" "I am sure of it." "That will be at least one the less," said the Brigand, in a hollow voice. And leaning on the arm of the Chourineur, he left the house of the *Allee des Veuves.*

THE MYSTERIES OF PARIS.

PART II.

CHAPTER I.

RESEARCHES.

The house that Rodolphe possessed in the Allée des Veuves was not the place of his ordinary abode. He dwelt in one of the largest hotels of the Faubourg St. Germain, situated at the end of the Rue Plumet. To avoid the honours due to his sovereign rank, he had guarded his "incognito" since his arrival in Paris. His "chargé d'affaires" near the court of France had announced that his master would return the indispensible official visits under the name and title of the Count de Duren. Thanks to the usage so frequent in the courts of the north, a prince can travel with as much liberty as ease, and escape those ceremonies which from constant repetition become tiresome. Notwithstanding his incognito, Rodolphe lived in great state. We lead the reader into the hotel the morning after the departure of the Chourineur. Ten o'clock had just struck. In the middle of a large room situated on the ground floor, and opening into the cabinet of Rodolphe, Murphy, seated before a desk, was sealing some dispatches. An usher, dressed in black, wearing around his neck a silver chain, opened the folding doors, and announced, "His Excellency the Baron de Graün!" Murphy, without desisting from his occupation, saluted the Baron with a gesture at once familiar and cordial. "Monsieur le Chargé d'affaires," said he smiling "will you step to the fire and warm yourself? I will be at your service in a moment." "Sir Walter Murphy, private secretary of his serene highness, I await your orders," answered the Baron, gaily, making a profound bow to the worthy knight.

The baron was about fifty years of age. His thin grey hair was slightly frizzed and powdered. His slightly protuberant chin was almost buried in the folds of a large muslin cravat of

dazzling whiteness. His expression betrayed tact; his demeanour distinction; and from the glasses of his golden spectacles peered a look as cunning as it was penetrating. Although so early in the morning the baron wore a black dress coat—according to etiquette—a riband of several colours was tied in the button-hole. He placed his hat on a chair, and walked to the fireplace, while Murphy continued his work. 'His highness must have been up all night, my dear Murphy, for your correspondence appears to be very voluminous." "My lord did not retire until six o'clock this morning. He has written, among others, a letter of eight pages to the grand-marshal, and he has dictated one not less in length to the chief of the Supreme Council." "Shall I await the 'levee' of his highness to give him the information I have obtained?"

"No, my dear Baron. My lord has given orders that he should not be awakened before two or three o'clock. He wishes you to send off these despatches by a special courier this morning instead of waiting until Monday. You will confide your information to me, and I will communicate it to his highness when he arises; such are his orders."

"Well! his highness will be satisfied, I believe, with what I have to tell him. But, my dear Murphy, I hope the sending of this courier is not of bad augury. The last despatches that I had the honour to transmit to his highness—" "Announced that all went on well there. And it is because my lord wishes to express, as soon as possible, his satisfaction to the chief of the Supreme Council and the grand-marshal, that he wishes you to send off this courier to-day."

"I recognise his highness there. If a reprimand had been in agitation, he would not have been in such haste; besides, there is only one opinion of the firm and wise administration of our government 'ad interim.' It is very simple," added the baron smiling: "the watch was good, and perfectly regulated by our master; it only required to be kept wound up, so that its sure and invariable action would continue to indicate the employment of each hour, and of every one. Order in a government produces always confidence and tranquility among the people; this it is which explains to me the good news you give." "And here, nothing new, dear Baron? nothing whispered? our mysterious adventures—" "Are completely unknown. Since the arrival of my lord at Paris,

have become so habituated only to see him very rarely among the few persons who were presented to him, they believe he prefers solitude, and that he makes frequent excursions in the environs of Paris. His highness has wisely dispensed, for a time, with the chamberlain and aid-de-camp whom he brought with him from Germany." "And who would have been very inconvenient witnesses for us." "Thus with the exception of the Countess Sarah M' Gregor, and her brother Tom Seyton, of Halsbury, and Karl, their tool, no one knows your adventures: now, neither the countess, nor her brother, nor Karl have any interest in betraying this secret." "Ah! my dear Baron," said Murphy, sighing, "what a misfortune that this cursed countess is a widow now!"

"Was she not married in 1827?"

"Yes; a little while after the death of that little girl, who would now have been sixteen or seventeen years old; and who my lord weeps for every day, without ever speaking of her."

"Regrets easily to be conceived, as his highness had no children by his marriage."

"Thus, my dear baron, I have thought that, independent of the pity which the poor Goualeuse inspired, the interest that my lord felt for this unfortunate creature was, above all, created by the thought that this child he so bitterly regrets (as much as he detests the countess her mother) would have been about the same age." "It does appear like a fatality, that this Sarah, from whom we thought ourselves for ever delivered, should just find herself free eighteen months after his highness has lost the model of wives The countess, believes, I am certain that she is favoured by fate in this double widowhood." "And her insensate hopes are stronger than ever, notwithstanding she knows that my lord has for her the most profound aversion. Has she not been the cause—Ah, baron," said Murphy, without finishing his phrase, "this woman is a horror. God grant she brings us no more trouble!"

"What can be feared from her, my dear Murphy? Formerly she had over my lord that influence which a cunning and intriguing woman always has over a young man who loves for the first time, and who, above all, finds himself in the circumstances you know; but this influence has been destroyed by the discovery of the unworthy manœuvres of this creature, and, above all, by the remembrance of the frightful event she caused."

"Lower, my dear De Graün—lower," said Murphy. "Alas!

we are now in this fatal month, and we draw near the date not less fatal, *this 13th. of January;* I always dread this fatal anniversary." "Yes if a great fault can be forgiven by expiation, ought not his highness to be absolved?"

"For pity's sake, my dear De Graün, let us talk no more about it. I shall feel sad for the rest of the day."

"I say then, that at this time the designs of the Countess Sarah are absurd: the death of the poor child broke the last link which could attach my lord to this woman; she is mad if she persists in her hopes." "Yes! but it is a dangerous madness. Her brother, you know, partakes of her ambitious and headstrong imagination; although this worthy couple have now as much reason to despair as they had to hope eighteen years ago."

"Ah! and what trouble has that infernal Abbé Polidoré caused in those days by his criminal complaisance!"

"Speaking of this wretch, I have been informed that he was here a year or two since, occupied in some infernal machinations."

"What a fall for a man of so much learning, mind, and intelligence! Heaven grant that he may not meet the countess! The union of these two evil spirits would be very dangerous."

"Once more, my dear Murphy, the interest of the countess, however unreasonable her ambition, will always prevent her profiting by the love or adventures of my lord, to try some wicked scheme." "I hope so: yet chance has prevented I do not know what proposition, detestible without doubt, that this woman wished to make to the Brigand—this frightful wretch, who, now no longer in a condition to injure any one, lives unknown, perhaps repentant, among some honest peasants of the village Saint Mandé. Alas! I feel convinced it was, above all, to avenge me, that my lord, in inflicting a terrible punishment, saw the risk of placing himself in a grave position."

"Grave! No, my dear Murphy; for this is the question. An escaped criminal, an acknowledged murderer, introduces himself into your house, and strikes you with his poniard; you can kill him by the legitimate law of self-defence, or send him to the scaffold; in either case he loses his life. Now, instead of killing him or handing him to the executioner, with a formidable punishment, but merited, you put this monster in a condition to arm no one—who will accuse you? Will justice commence a civil action against you, in favour of such a bandit? Could you be condemned

for not having gone as far as the law allowed—for only having deprived him of sight instead of killing him? How! to defend my life, or to revenge a flagrant case of adultery, society recognises my right of life or death on my fellow-creature a formidable right, or control, without appeal, which constitutes me judge and executioner, and yet I cannot modify at my pleasure the capital punishment which otherwise I could inflict with impunity! and above all—in a case like this of the Brigand—I put aside our position as sovereign prince of the Germanic Confederation. I know, of right, that signifies nothing; but it is a forced privilege; besides such a process commenced against my lord—how many generous actions would plead for him? Once more: suppose this strange cause should be called before the Tribunal, what do you think would happen?" "My lord has always said he would accept the accusation, and not avail himself of the immunity of his position. But who could noise about these events? You know the unshaken discretion of David and the four Hungarian servants of the house in the Allée des Veuves. The Chourineur, whom my lord has rewarded, has not spoken a word on the subject to any one. As to the Brigand himself, he knows that to complain himself is to bring his head to the scaffold. Finally, neither his highness, nor you, nor I will speak of it: is it not so?" "My dear Murphy, this secret, although known to a great many, will not be the less kept. At the most, some difficulties alone would be to fear; and yet such noble and grand actions would be brought to light in this strange trial, that such an accusation, I repeat it, would be a triumph for his highness." "You reassure me, completely. But you bring me the information you have obtained with the aid of the letters found on the Brigand, and by the declarations made by La Chouette during her stay at the Hospital, which she left a few days since, completely cured." "Here are the papers," said the baron, drawing them from his pocket. "They are relative to the researches made concerning the birth of the young girl called La Goualeuse, and on the actual place of residence of François Germaine, son of the Brigand."

NOTE RELATIVE TO FLEUR DE MARIE.

"Towards the commencement of the year 1827, a man called Pierre Tournemine, now confined in the galleys of Rochefort for the crime of forgery, proposed to the woman Gervais, called La Chouette, to take charge of a little girl, about five or six

years of age, for which she was to receive the sum of one thousand francs.

("Alas! my dear baron, "said Murphy, interrupting M. de Graün. "1827—that is the same year that my lord heard of the death of the little girl he regretted so bitterly. On this account, and many others, this year was a sad one for our master.")

"The bargain concluded, the child remained for two years with this woman, at the end of which, wishing to escape the bad treatment with which she was overwhelmed, the little girl disappeared; La Chouette had not seen or heard of her for many years, when she met her about six weeks since in a tavern of the cité. The child now become a young girl, bore the surname of La Goualeuse. A few days before this encounter the above-mentioned Tournemine, whom the Brigand had known at the galleys, had sent to Bras-Rouge a detailed letter concerning the child formerly confided to La Chouette. From this letter, and from the declarations of the woman, it appears that Madame Séraphin, housekeeper to a notary called Jacques Ferrand, had, in 1827, charged Tournemine to find a woman who, for the sum of one thousand francs, would consent to take charge of a child five or six years that some one wished to abandon. La Chouette accepted the proposition.

"The object of Tournemine in addressing Bras-Rouge was to put him in the way, through some third person, to extort money from Madame Séraphin, by threatening to noise their adventures about. Tournemine affirmed that this Madame Séraphin was only the agent of some person unknown. Bras-Rouge had confided this letter to La Chouette, an associate for some time in crime with the Brigand, this explains how the document was found in possession of the Brigand, and why, when she met La Goualeuse at the Lapin Blanc, La Chouette, to torment Fleur de Marie, said to her, 'Your parents are found, but you shall not know them.'"

"Information has been obtained of Madame Séraphin, and of the notary, Jacques Ferrand." "They are both alive."

"The notary lives in the Rue du Sentier, he passes for being very austere and pious: at least he attends church punctually; he exercises in his practise an excessive regularity, approaching to harshness; his business is excellent; he lives with a parsimony approaching to avarice; Madame Séraphin still continues his housekeeper.

"Jacques Ferrand, who was very poor, has bought his office for three hundred and fifty thousand francs; these funds were furnished him, under a good guarantee by Mr. Charles Robert, superior officer of the staff of the National Guard of Paris, a very handsome young man. He divides with the notary the profits of the office, which is estimated to be about fifty thousand francs; but he has nothing to do with the national affairs. It appears, then, certain, that Madame Séraphin, housekeeper of this man, can furnish precious intelligence as to the birth of La Goualeuse."

"Truly: dear Baron," said Murphy, "there is some appearance of reality in the declarations of this Tournemine. Perhaps we shall find at the notary's the means of discovering the relations of this unfortunate girl. Now, have you been able to obtain as much information concerning the son of the Brigand?"

"Perhaps less precise; it is, however, quite satisfactory."

"You see that this Bras-Rouge is the soul of all these undertakings."

"Without doubt; and it was in going to look for Bras-Rouge in his den in the city, Rue aux Féves, that my lord met the Chourineur and La Goualeuse. His highness wished to profit by the occasion to visit these fearful haunts, thinking that perhaps he would find there some unfortunate beings he might drag from the filth. His presentiment did not deceive him; but at the price of what dangers—my God!" "Dangers that you have barely partaken of, my dear Murphy." 'Am I not, on this account, *coalman in ordinary* to his Serene Highness!'" asked Murphy laughing. "Rather say intrepid body-guard my worthy friend. But to speak of your courage and devotion is but a tautology. Here is the note concerning François Germain, son of Madame Georges and the Brigand Duresnel."

"About eighteen months since, a young man François Germain arrived at Paris, from Nantes, where he had been employed in the banking-house of Noël and Co. It appears from the acknowledgments of the Brigand, and from several letters found upon him, that the scoundrel to whom he confided his son, in order to pervert him, so that he might some day be employed in criminal affairs, unfolded this horrible scheme to the young man, in proposing to him to favour an attempt at robbery and forgery in the banking-house where he was employed. The young man refused this offer with indignation; but not wishing to denounce the man who had

brought him up, he wrote an anonymous letter to his patron, advising him of the plot, and left Nantes secretly, to escape from the hands of those who had desired to make him their accomplice.

"These wretches, learning his flight, came to Paris, had an interview with Bras-Rouge, and then commenced a search, without doubt with evil intentions, since this young man knew their designs. After a long pursuit, they at length discovered his retreat: it was too late; Germain, having some days before met the person who had endeavoured to corrupt him, had changed his abode, suspecting the motive which brought this man to Paris: thus a second time he escaped from his persecutors. However, about six weeks since, these wretches ascertained that he lived in the Rue du Temple, No. 17. One night, in entering his lodgings, he had a narrow escape from being murdered (this circumstance the Brigand had concealed from my lord.) Germain, suspecting who the parties were, left the Rue du Temple, and up to this time no information can be obtained of his place of abode. The researches were at this point, when the Brigand was punished for his crimes. It was at this point also they have been resumed by order of his highness. And here is the result.

"François Germain lived about three months in the house in the Rue du Temple, a house otherwise extremely curious from the manners and strange occupations of most of its inhabitants. Germain was very much liked there for his gay, lively, and obliging disposition; although he appeared to live on a narrow income, he had shown great kindness to an indigent family who lived in the garret of this house; it is supposed he was employed in some office or commercial house, for he went out in the morning and returned towards ten o'clock in the evening. The only person that knows to a certainty where he dwells at present is a lodger in the house in the Rue du Temple; this young girl, who appears intimately connected with Germain, is a very pretty 'grisette,' called Rigolette; she occupies the room next to the one where Germain lodged; this room, vacant since his departure, is now to be let." "Rigolette?" said Murphy, suddenly, who for some moments had appeared as if in deep thought; "Rigolette? I know that name! "What! Sir Walter Murphy!" answered the baron, laughing; "most worthy and respectable father of a family, you know a 'grisette?' The name of Mlle. Rigolette is not new to you! Ah! fy!"

"By Jove! My lord has put me in the way of having such strange acquaintances, that you ought not to be so much surprised, baron; but wait a moment. Yes, now I recollect perfectly: my lord, in relating to me the history of La Goualeuse, could not prevent a laugh at this droll name of Rigolette; as well as I can remember, she was one of the prison friends of this poor Fleur de Marie." "Well at this time, Mlle. Rigolette can be of excessive utility."

"There would perhaps be some advantage in hiring the vacant chamber in the Rue du Temple. No instructions have been given to push these investigations farther; but, from some words let drop by the porteress, we have every reason to believe, not only will it be possible to find in this house some certain information respecting François Germain, by means of this Mlle. Rigolette, but that my lord can witness there manners, customs, occupations, and, above all, misery, of which he suspects not the existence."

CHAPTER II.

THE MARQUIS D'HARVILLE.

"Thus, you see my dear Murphy," said the Baron, on finishing the reading of this report, which he handed to him, "that it is at the notary Jacques Ferrand's we must seek for the trace of the parents of La Goualeuse, and it is from Mlle. Rigolette we must ask for the abode of François Germain. It is already a great deal, it seems to me, to know where to seek—what one is in search of."

"Without doubt, Baron; besides, my lord will find an ample harvest in the house of which you speak. This is not all yet; have you informed yourself of that concerning the Marquis d'Harville?" "Yes; and as regards the question of money, the fears of his highness have no foundation. The fortune of the marquis has never been more substantial nor more wisely administered."

"After having in vain sought for the cause of the profound chagrin which appeared to oppress the marquis, my lord thought it was possible that he might be embarrassed in his affairs: he would then have come to his assistance in that mysterious, delicate way, which you know, he can manage so well but since he is mistaken in his conjectures, he will have to renounce his inquiries with so much the more regret, as he loves and esteems him so

much." "It is quite plain his highness has never forgotten all that his father owes to the Marquis. Do you know my dear Murphy, that, in 1815, at the time of the reorganization of the states of the Germanic Confederation the father of his highness ran great risks of banishment on account of his attachment for Napoleon! The deceased Marquis d'Harville rendered, on this occasion, immense services to the father of our master, thanks to the friendship of the Emperor Alexander." "And now see, baron, how often noble actions are linked together: in 92 the father of the marquis was proscribed; he found in Germany, with the father of my lord, the most generous hospitality; after a sojourn of three years at our court he set off for Russia where he merited the attention of the Czar, and with his assistance he is able to be of great use to the prince who had so kindly received him many years before."

"Was it not in 1815 during the sojourn, of the old Marquis d'Harville with the then reigning grand-duke that the friendship of my lord and the young d'Harville commenced?" "Yes; they have preserved the most delightful recollections of these joyous scenes of their youth. This is not all. My lord has such profound respect for the memory of the man who was so useful to his father that all who belong to the family of d'Harville have a claim on his benevolence. Thus, not less on account of her misfortunes and her virtues than this relationship, has Madame Georges been indebted to the kindness of his highness." "Madame Georges! wife of Duresnel! the galley-slave!" cried the baron. "Yes, the mother of this François Germain, whom we seek for, and who, I hope, we shall find." "She is a relation of d'Harville!" "She was cousin of his mother, and her most intimate friend. The old Marquis had for Madame Georges the greatest friendship." "But how could the d'Harville family allow her to marry this monster, my dear Murphy?"

"The father of this unfortunate woman, M. de Lagny, intendant of Languedoc before the Revolution, possessed great wealth; he escaped the proscription. In the few days of quietness which remained after this terrible epoch, he looked about for a husband for his daughter. Duresnel presented himself; he belonged to an excellent parliamentary family; he was rich, but under a hypocritical exterior he concealed the most profligate inclinations; he married Mademoiselle de Lagny. After a short time of dissimulation, the vices of this man soon displayed themselves: dissipa-

ted, an immoderate gambler, addicted to intemperance, he rendered his wife miserable. She did not complain, concealed her griefs, and, after the death of her father, retired to an estate which she improved to divert her mind. Soon their common fortune was swallowed up in play and debauchery; the property whither she had retired, was sold. Then she brought her son and joined her relation, the Marchioness d'Harville, whom she loved as a sister. Duresnel, having run through his own property and that of his wife, found himself reduced to expedients; he became a forger, robber, assasin, was condemned for life to the galleys, and took his son from his wife, to confide him to one of his confederates. You know the rest."

"But how did my lord find out Madame Duresnel?" "When Duresnel was sent to the galleys, his wife, reduced to the most profound poverty, took the name of Georges." "In this cruel position, why did she not apply to the Marchioness d'Harville, her best friend?" "The marchioness died before the condemnation of Duresnel, and since, from an invincible shame, never has Madame Georges presented herself to her family, who certainly would have had for her that regard her misfortunes merited. However, once reduced to the most absolute misery by sickness, she resolved to implore assistance from d'Harville, the son of her dearest friend. It was thus that my lord met her." "How then?" "One day he was going to see d'Harville; a few steps before him walked a poor woman, wretchedly clothed, pale, suffering, and cast down. Arrived at the door of the Hôtel d'Harville, at the moment she was about to knock, after long hesitation she turned quickly around, as if her courage failed her. Very much surprised my lord followed this woman, much interested with her modest and sorrowful manner. She entered into a lodging of a very humble appearance. My lord made some inquiries concerning her, and found that she sewed for her living, but that work and health were both wanting, and that she was reduced to a state of abject misery. The next day I went to the house with my lord. We arrived in time to prevent her dying with hunger. After a long illness, in which every care and attention was paid her, she related the story of her life to his highness, of whose rank she was entirely ignorant." "And thus it was he became acquainted with the fact that Madame Georges belonged to the family of D'Harville!" "Yes; and after this explanation, my lord, who appre-

ciated more and more the excellent qualities of Madame Georges, made her leave Paris, and established her at the farm of Bouqueval, where she is at present with La Goualeuse. She has found in this quiet retreat, if not happiness, at least tranquility, and in overseeing the farm, she can chase away her sorrows. As much to assuage the susceptibility of Madame Georges, as because he does not wish to speak of his benefactions, my lord has left d'Harville ignorant of the whole affair." "I can now comprehend the double interest his highness has to discover the son of this poor woman." "You can judge also by this, my dear baron, of the affection that my lord has for all this family, and how lively is his chagrin at seeing the young marquis so sad, with so many reasons to be happy." "Yes, and what does the marquis need? He unites everything, birth, fortune, mind, and youth; his wife is charming, as virtuous as she is handsome." "That is true and my lord has only thought of what we have been talking about, after having in vain endeavoured to penetrate the cause of the melancholy of d'Harville; he has always shown much sensibility at the repeated testimonials of affection from his highness, but has always remained completely reserved on this subject. Perhaps it is a heart sickness!"

"Yet they say he is very much in love with his wife; she gives him no cause for jealousy. I often meet her in society: she is very much surrounded, as almost all young and charming women are, but her reputation has never suffered the slightest taint." "Yes, the marquis boasts much of his wife. He has had a little discussion with her on the subject of the Countess Sarah M'Gregor." "Does she visit her, then?" "By the most unlucky chance, the father of the Marquis d' Harville knew, some seventeen years ago, Sarah Seyton of Halsbury, and her brother Tom, during their stay in Paris, where they were patronised by the English ambassadress. Learning that the brother and sister were going to Germany, the old marquis gave them letters of introduction to the father of my lord. Alas! my dear De Graün, perhaps without this introduction many of our troubles would have been avoided, for my lord would never have known this woman. However, when the Countess Sarah returned here, knowing the friendship of his highness for the marquis, she presented herself at the Hotel d' Harville, in the hopes of meeting my lord; she is as eager in her pursuit, as my lord is to avoid her."

"To disguise herself as a man, to run after him in the cité. No one else but this woman would have thought of such a thing." She hopes by this to force my lord to an interview, which he has always refused and avoided. But, to return to the marchioness, her husband, to whom my lord had spoken of Sarah as she deserved, had advised his wife to see her as seldom as possible; but the young marchioness, seduced by the hypocritical flatteries of the countess, has a little revolted at this advice. Hence some little dissensions, but which certainly are not the cause of the secret grief of the marquis."

"Ah! women, women! my dear Murphy; I regret much that the marchioness is acquainted with this Sarah. This young and lovely woman can only lose by such an acquaintance—such a diabolical creature." "Speaking of diabolical creatures," said Murphy, "here is a dispatch relative to Cecily, the unworthy wife of the worthy David." "Between ourselves, my dear Murphy, this audacious mulatto would have well merited the punishment that her husband, our good negro doctor, inflicted on the brigand. She has also caused blood to flow, and is frightfully corrupt." "Yet, notwithstanding all this, so handsome, so seducing! A wicked heart under a gracious exterior always causes me great horror." "On this account Cecily is doubly odious; but I hope that this dispatch annuls the last orders of my lord on the subject of this miserable creature." "On the contrary, Baron." "My lord, then, still desires that she should be assisted to escape from the fortress where she has been sent for life?" "Yes." "And that her pretended ravisher should bring her to Paris?" "Yes, and more; this despatch orders them to hasten her escape, and to make her travel rapidly, so that she can reach here in ten days at the farthest."

"I am lost in astonishment. My lord has always evinced such a repugnance for her!" "And he manifests now, if possible, still more." "Yet he sends for her to come to him? However it will always be easy to get rid of Cecily if she does not accomplish what he expects from her. The son of the jailer of the fortress of Gerolstein is ordered to carry her off, feigning to be in love with her; he has every facility offered him to accomplish this project. Delighted with her escape, she will follow her supposed lover to Paris; but she will always be an escaped prisoner, and I have everything in order to claim her from the government whenever my lord may require it." "We shall see, my dear De Graün. When David, learned by my lord of the approaching arrival of

Cecily, he was thunderstruck; he exclaimed, 'I hope your highness will not oblige me to see this monster!' 'Be easy,' said my lord, 'you shall not see her; but I have need of her for certain projects. David was much relieved by this declaration. Nevertheless, I am convinced sad recollections are revived for him." "Poor negro! no doubt he loves her still. They say she is so handsome!" "Charming, too charming. The unpitying eye of a Creole is necessary to discover the mixed blood in the imperceptible shade of bistre which lightly colours the top of the rosy finger-nails of this mulatto; our bright beauties of the north have not a more beautiful complexion, a whiter skin, nor more golden, chestnut hair." "I was in France, when my lord returned from America, bringing with him David and Cecily. I know this excellent man has since that time been attached to his highness by the most lively gratitude, but I have always been ignorant how he came to be annexed to the suite of our master, and how he married Cecily who I saw for the first time about a year after her marriage, and God knows the scandal she had already created!" "I can inform you of what you wish to know, my dear baron; I accompanied my lord in this voyage to America, where he rescued David and the mulatto from their frightful fate." "You are very kind, my dear Murphy;" said the baron.

CHAPTER III.

STORY OF DAVID AND CECILY.

"Mr. Willis, a rich American planter of Florida," said Murphy, "had observed in one of his black slaves named David, attached to the infirmary of his habitation, a very remarkable degree of intelligence, a profound commiseration for the poor sick, to whom he gave the medicines prescribed by the physicians, and finally, a taste so remarkable for the study of botany as applied to medicine, that, without any instruction, he had classified all the plants found on the plantation and in the environs. The residence of Mr. Willis, situated on the border of the sea, was about fifteen, or twenty leagues from the nearest city. The physicians of the country, ignorant enough, put themselves to no inconvenience on account of the distance, and the irregular means of communication. Wishing to remedy this, and have always near him a skilful prac-

titioner, he thought he would send this young man to study medicine and surgery in France. Delighted with the offer, the young man went to Paris; at the end of eight years of hard study, David received his degree, with great distinction, and returned to America to place his knowledge at the disposal of his master." "But David ought to have looked on himself as free in setting his foot on the soil of France!" "But David was of rare loyalty: he promised Mr. Willis that he would return, and he did return; besides, he did not regard as his own, instruction acquired with the money of his master: and still more he hoped to ameliorate morally and physically, the sufferings of the slaves, his ancient companions. He promised himself, not only to be their physician, but their support, their defender with their master." "He must have been endowed with rare probity, and a lofty feeling for his fellows, to return to a master, after a stay of eight years, at Paris, among the most democratic young men of Europe." "From all this you can judge the man. Well, behold him in Florida, and it must be said, treated with consideration by Mr. Willis; eating at his table, and sleeping under his roof. Yet, this man, stupid, wicked, and sensual—despotic, like most of the creoles, thought himself very generous in allowing him a salary of six hundred francs. At the end of a few months, the typhus fever broke out; Mr. Willis was attacked, but promptly cured by the excellent care of David. Of thirty negroes grievously attacked, only two perished. Mr. Willis, enchanted with the services of David, increased his wages to twelve hundred francs. The black doctor thought himself the happiest man in the world; his brethren looked upon him as a God; he had obtained, it is true, some amelioration of their condition; he hoped still more for the future; in the mean while he consoled these poor people; he exhorted them to resignation; he spoke to them of God, who watched over the negro as over the white; of another world, not peopled with masters and slaves, but with the just and righteous; of another life—eternal—where one was not a beast of burden, the thing of another, but where the victims of this lower world were so happy, that they prayed in heaven for their executioners. A year passed in this manner. Among the prettiest slaves had been remarked a mulatto of fifteen, named Cecily. Mr. Willis, took a sultan's fancy for this young girl; but for the first time in his life perhaps, he received a decided refusal. Cecily loved; she loved David, who, during

the epidemic, had saved and nursed her with the tenderest care; love, the most pure love, paid the debt of gratitude. David had too much delicacy to speak of his happiness until the time should come that he could marry her; he only waited until she had attained her sixteenth year. Mr. Willis, ignorant of this mutual affection, had superbly cast his handkerchief at the pretty mulatto. She came and related to David what had happened, and he resolved to go at once, and ask her in marriage."

"The deuce! my dear Murphy, I am afraid to guess the answer of the American sultan. He refused?"

"Yes. He said he had a fancy for this young girl: he had never permitted a refusal from a slave; he liked her, and would have her. David might choose any other woman he pleased. David spoke of his love, which Cecily had returned a long time. The planter shrugged his shoulders; it was in vain. The Creole had the impudence to say that it was showing a bad example for a master to give up to a slave, and that he would not set this example to satisfy a whim of David. He supplicated; the master became impatient. David, ashamed to humble himself farther, spoke in a firm manner of the services he had rendered, and of his disinterestedness. Mr. Willis, very much irritated, answered 'that he was a thousand times too well treated for a slave.' At these words, the indignation of David burst forth: for the first time, he spoke as a man enlightened as to his rights by his sojourn of eight years in France. Mr. Willis, furious, treated him as a slave, and threatened to chain him. David answered with bitter and violent words. Two hours after, tied to a stake, they lacerated him with a whip, while, before his eyes, Cecily was dragged into the seraglio of the planter."

"The conduct of this planter was stupid and frightful; it was the absurdity of cruelty. He had need of the services of this man after all."

"Such need, that on this very day, the rage into which he had thrown himself, joined to his habitual intoxication, brought on a most violent inflammatory disease, which made a rapid progress; an acute disease sat in: an express was sent for a physician, but it was impossible that he could arrive for thirty-six hours."

"Truly, all this seems providential. The fatal position of this man was well deserved."

"The disease made most rapid progress. David could alone

save him; but the planter, distrustful, like all such wretches, had not a doubt but that the black, to revenge himself, would poison him; for after the whipping they had thrown David into a dungeon. Finally, frightened at the progress of the malady, sinking under his sufferings, thinking that, with death staring him in the face, he had at least a chance in the generosity of his slave, after long hesitation, Willis ordered David to be released."

"And David saved the planter?" "For five days and nights he watched him as he would his father, combating with the disease step by step, showing profound knowledge and admirable skill; he succeeded in conquering it, to the great surprise of the physician they had sent for, and who had only arrived the second day." "And when once more restored to health, the planter—" "Not wishing to show his shame before his slave who had overwhelmed him with such generosity, he contrived, with considerable expense to secure the services of the physician, by attaching him to his household. David was sent back to his dungeon." "That is horrible! but it does not astonish me; David would have been for this man a living remorse." "This barbarous conduct was not dictated alone by vengeance and jealously. The negroes of Mr. Willis loved David with all the ardour of gratitude; he was for them the saviour of their souls and bodies. They knew what he had done for their master during his late illness. Thus emerging, as if by a miracle, from the brutal apathy into which slavery usually plunges the creature, they showed plainly their indignation, or rather their grief, when they saw David wounded with the lashes of the whip. Mr. Willis, much exasperated, thought he saw in this symptoms of a revolt. Knowing the influence that David had acquired over his slaves, he thought he might direct a rising to revenge himself for the ingratitude of his master. This fear was a new motive for the planter to overwhelm him with cruel treatment, and place him in a position where he could do no injury." "With this view of the case, this conduct seems to be less foolish, although none the less ferocious."

"A short time after these events we arrived in America. My lord had chartered a Danish brig at St. Thomas; we visited, incognito, several of the habitations on the coast. We were magnificently received by Mr. Willis. The evening after our arrival, at table, excited as much by drink as the desire of boasting, Mr. Willis related to us as a good joke the history of David and Ceci-

ly; for I forgot to tell you that this unfortunate creature was also cast into a dungeon to punish her for the disdainful rejection of of her master. At this frightful story his highness thought that Willis was boasting, or that he was drunk; the man was drunk but he was not boasting. To convince our incredulity, the planter arose from the table reeling, told a slave to take a lantern, and conduct us to the dungeon of David." "Well?" "Never in my life have I seen such a heart-rending spectacle. Haggard, thin, half naked, covered with sores, David and this unhappy girl chained by the middle of the body, the one at one end of the dungeon, the other at the opposite, they looked like spectres. The lantern which lighted us cast on this picture a still more gloomy shade. David uttered not a word. The planter said, with cruel irony, 'Well, doctor, how d'ye do? You who are so learned! save yourself, then!' The black answered by one word, with a gesture sublime; he slowly raised his right hand, and pointed with his finger towards heaven: and without looking at his master, he said, in a solemn tone, 'God!' 'God?' answered the planter, with a shout of laughter; 'say to him I defy him to carry away my slaves before death!'"

"He was a disgusting fool!"

"We were so much disgusted, my lord said not a word. We left the dungeon. We returned on board the brig, which was anchored off at a short distance. At one o'clock in the morning, when all the inhabitants were plunged in a profound sleep, my lord landed with eight men, well armed, went straight to the dungeon, forced it, and carried off David and Cecily. The two victims were carried on board without being perceived; after which my lord and myself returned to the mansion of the planter. Strange! unaccountable; these men torture their slaves, yet take no precautions against them; they sleep with the windows and doors open. We reached easily the chamber of the planter, lighted by a small lamp. My lord awoke this man. He started up, his brain still bewildered from the effects of drink. 'You have this night defied God to take away your two victims, before their death! He does take them away,' said my lord. Then taking a bag that I carried, and which held 25,000 francs in gold, he threw it on the bed, and added, 'This will indemnify you for the loss of your slaves. To your violence which kills, I oppose a violence which saves. God shall be our judge: and we disappeared, leaving Mr. Willis

stupified, immovable, believing himself in a dream. Some minutes afterward we were on board the brig, and set sail." "It seems to me, my dear Murphy, that his highness paid too largely to this scoundrel for the loss of his slaves; for, in truth, David did not belong to him any more." "We had calculated about the expense incurred by David's studies at Paris during eight years, and then added at least three times their value as common slaves. Our conduct was contrary to law, I know; but if you had seen the almost agonizing condition of these poor creatures, if you had heard this sacrilegious defiance of God, you would comprehend how my lord wished, as he said, on this occasion, 'to play a little the part of Providence.'" "It was as much to be censured, and as much to be justified as the punishment of the Brigand, my worthy sir. And nothing resulted from this?" "Nothing could happen. The brig was under Danish colours; the incognito of his highness strictly guarded; we passed for rich Englishmen. To whom could Mr. Willis, if he dared complain, address his reclamations? In fact, he told us himself, and the physician attested it, that the two slaves could not have lived eight days longer in that frightful dungeon. It needed the greatest care and attention to restore David and Cecily to health. Since this time, he has remained attached to the household as physician, and he has for my lord the most profound attachment." "David married Cecily, without doubt, on his arrival in Europe?" "This marriage which promised to be so happy, took place in the chapel of the palace; but a strange and extraordinary change—hardly in the enjoyment of an unlooked-for position, forgetting all that David had suffered for her, and all that she had suffered for him, ashamed, in this new world, that she had married a negro, Cecily, seduced by a man of great depravity, committed her first fault; one would say that the innate perversity of this creature, until then dormant, only awaited, this moment to develope itself with fearful energy. You know the rest—the scandal of her adventures. After two years' marriage, David who had as much confidence as love, learned all this infamy: like a thunder-bolt, it drew him from his blind and profound security."

"It was said that he wished to kill his wife?"

"Yes but thanks to my lord, he consented that she should be imprisoned for life in a fortress; and it is this prison that his highness has just opened—to your great astonishment, and mine,

I will not conceal it, my dear baron." "Frankly, the resolution of my lord astonishes me, the more, since the governor of the fortress, has, on several occasions, informed his highness that this woman was incorrigible: it was impossible to change this audacious character, hardened by vice; yet my lord persists in bringing her here. For what end? and for what motive?"

"My dear baron, I am just as ignorant as you are. But it grows late, and his highness desires your courier should set out as soon as possible for Gerolstein." "Before two o'clock he will be on the road. So my dear Murphy, farewell."

CHAPTER IV.

A HOUSE IN THE RUE DU TEMPLE.

The same day of the conversation between the Baron de Graün and Murphy, a gloomy winter's day, Rodolphe went about three o'clock to the Rue du Temple. Situated in the centre of a populous and busy quarter, this house offered nothing in its aspect any way peculiar; it consisted of a ground floor and four stories surmounted by a garret. A dark, narrow alley led to a little court, or rather a kind of yard, five or six feet broad, completely deprived of air and light, an infected receptacle of all the filth and dirt of the house, which rained down as it were from each story. At the foot of a damp and black staircase, a reddish light indicated the lodge of the porter; a room very much smoked, from the continual burning of a lamp, which was necessary, even at mid-day, to illuminate this obscure hole, where we will follow Rodolphe, who was dressed as a shopkeeper's clerk in his every-day clothes.

He wore a paletôt of a doubtful colour, a hat not very new, a red cravat, and heavy shoes. To complete the illusion of his part, Rodolphe had under his arm a package of goods carefully tied up. He entered the lodge to ask to look at the vacant room.

When Rodolphe ventured into this den, Monsieur Pipelet, the porter, momentarily absent, was represented by Madame Pipelet; seated near an iron stove, which was in the middle of the room, she appeared to be listening to the boiling of the pot.

At the sight of Rodolphe, the porteress pronounced in a surly

tone these decisive words, "Where are you going to?" "Madame, there is a chamber and a cabinet, I believe, to be let in this house?" asked Rodolphe, emphasizing the word madame; which flattered her not a little. She answered less sharply, "There is a room to be let on the fourth story, but it cannot be seen. Alfred is gone out!" "Your son, no doubt, Madame; will he soon return?" "No, Sir, he is not my son; he is my husband. Pray, why should not Pipelet be called Alfred?" "He has the most perfect right, madame; but if you will permit, I will await his return. I wish to hire this chamber; the quarter and street suit me, the house pleases me, for it appears to be admirably well kept. However, before looking at the apartment I should like to know if you could, madame, take charge of my room? I am always accustomed to employ the 'concierges;' that is, when they are willing."

This proposition, expressed in such flattering terms, "concierge!" completely gained Madame Pipelet. She answered, "most certainly, Sir, I will take charge of your chamber. I flatter myself, for six francs a month, you shall be served like a prince."

"Agreed, for the six francs. Madame, your name."

"Pomona-Fortunée-Anastasia Pipelet."

"Well, Madame Pipelet, I'll allow you six francs per month for your wages. If the room suits me—what is the price?"

"With the cabinet, a hundred and fifty francs; not one sous less. The principal tenant is a dog—a dog who would skin an egg."

"And you call him—" "Bras Rouge." The name and the recollections it awakened made Rodolphe shudder. "You say, Madame Pipelet, that the principal tenant is called—" "Bras Rouge. Well?" "And he lives?" "Rue aux Fèves, No. 13; he has also a tavern in the moats of the Champs Elysées." There was no longer any doubt it was the same man. This rencounter seemed strange to Rodolphe. "If Bras Rouge is the chief tenant, who is the proprietor of the house?" "Mr. Bourdon; but I arrange affairs altogether with Bras Rouge." Wishing to inspire the porteress with confidence, Rodolphe replied, "Look here, my dear Madame Pipelet, I am quite tired; I am almost frozen with cold. Do me the favour to go to the wine merchant, and bring me a bottle of Cassis and two glasses or rather three, for your husband will soon return," and he gave her five francs.

"Ah! now, Sir, you wish, then, from the first, one shall adore you," cried the porteress, whose pimpled nose seemed to be illuminated with all the fires of an anticipated debauch. "But I will only bring two glasses; Alfred and I always drink out of the same. Poor dear, he is so dainty for all that concerns women!" "Go, Madame Pipelet, we will await Alfred." "Ah! now, if some one comes you will take care of the lodge?" "Be easy." The old woman went out.

Remaining alone, Rodolphe reflected on the singular circumstance that again brought him in contact with Bras-Rouge; what astonished him the most was, that François Germain could have remained three months in this house before he was discovered by the accomplices of the Brigand, who were in concert with Bras-Rouge. At this moment, a postman knocked against the window of the lodge, and passing through his arm, holding two letters, said, "Three sous." "Six sous, since there are two letters," said Rodolphe. "One is paid," answered the man. After having paid it, Rodolphe at first regarded the two letters mechanically, but soon they seemed to him to be worthy of closer examination. On the seal of one was the cipher C. R., surmounted by a helmet, with, for support, a cross of the legion of honour. Madame Pipelet re-entered, bringing the bottle of cassis and two glasses. "I have been very slow, have I not Sir? But when one once gets into the shop of father Joseph, there is no way to get out. Ah! would you believe, with an old woman like myself, he wishes to play the fool?" "The devil! if Alfred knew that!" Don't speak of it, my blood boils when I think of it. Alfred is as jealous as a Bedouin; and yet, on the part of Joseph, it is only a joke—a joke on my honour." "Here are two letters the postman has left," said Rodolphe. One of the two letters, addressed to you is franked; and without being indiscreet, I take the liberty of observing that you have a correspondent there whose 'billets doux' smell furiously good." "Let us see," said the porteress, taking the perfumed billet, "faith, it is true, it has the air of a billet doux; ah! well! who is then the blackguard who dares?" "And if Alfred was here, Madame Pipelet?" "Don't speak of it, or I shall faint in your arms." "Oh! I shan't say another word, Madame Pipelet." "But an't I a fool? I see," said the porteress, shrugging her shoulders, "I know it's from the commandant. Ah! what a sudden fright I had."

Saying this, the porteress had unsealed the letter which was addressed to her. She turned and twisted it about, and, after a moment's hesitation, she said to Rodolphe, "It is always Alfred who reads my letters. If you would Sir, take his place—" "To read the letter? willingly," said Rodolphe, very curious to know who was the correspondent of Madame Pipelet. He read as follows:—"To-morrow, Friday, at eleven o'clock, you will have a large fire made in the two saloons, have the glasses well cleaned, take all the coverings off the furniture, and be careful not to injure the gilding in dusting. If by chance I have not arrived, and a lady should come and ask for Mr. Charles at about one o'clock, show her up to the apartment, lock the door, and keep the key until I come." Notwithstanding the singular style of this billet, Rodolphe understood perfectly its import, and said to the porteress, "Who lives on the first floor?" The old woman placed her yellow and wrinkled finger on her under lip, and answered with a malicious chuckle, "Hush, its an intrigue." "I ask you this, my dear Madame Pipelet, because before one takes a room in a house, one likes to know." "Oh yes, quite plain, 'tell me the company, I'll tell you the man,' is it not so?" "Just what I was going to say." "However, I can tell you what I know about it—not a long story. About six weeks ago, an upholsterer came here to look at the first floor, which was to let, and to ask the price; the next morning he came with a fine young fair-haired man, small mustaches, cross of honour, fine linen. The upholsterer called him 'commandant.'" "He was a soldier, then?" "Soldier!" answered Madame Pipelet, shrugging her shoulders; "oh, go away, Alfred might as well call himself a concierge." "How?" "He only belongs to the national guard—to the staff. The upholsterer called him so, just to flatter him. In short, when the commandant had seen all, he said to the upholsterer, 'It is good; it suits me; arrange for me; see the proprietor.' 'Yes, commandant,' replied the other. And the next day the upholsterer signed the lease, in his own name, with Bras-Rouge, paying him six months in advance, because, it appears, the young man did not wish to be known. Presently came the workmen bringing sofas, silk curtains, gilt glasses, superb furniture; it is as handsome as any café on the Boulevards—without speaking of carpets, so thick and soft that one would really think you were walking on velvet. When it

was all finished, the commandant came to take a look; he said to Alfred, 'Can you take charge of this apartment, where I shall not come often; make the fires from time to time, and prepare everything to receive me when I advise you by the post?' 'Yes, commandant,' said Alfred. 'And how much will you charge me for this?' 'Twenty francs a month, commandant.' 'Twenty francs! oh, come now, you joke, porter?' Now just imagine this fine gentleman bargaining like a miser with poor people, for one or two pieces of five francs, when he had been at a considerable expense for an apartment which he did not occupy? However, by force of battling we got twelve francs. How different from you, Sir," added the porteress, addressing Rodolphe in a pleasant manner; "you do not wish to be called commandant; you have the appearance of nobody, yet you agree with me for the six francs at once." "And has this young man returned since." "You shall see; that is the funniest part of it; it appears that some one doses him too much. He has already written three times, like to-day, 'light the fire, arrange every thing, and a lady would come.' Oh yes, go and see if she will come." "Nobody came?" "Listen! the first of the three times, the commandant arrived in great snuff, humming to himself, and playing the lord; he waited two mortal hours—nobody. When he passed out, we, Pipelet and myself, watched for him, to see his face and vex him, saying to him, 'Commandant, there has no one come at all—no one; no little lady to ask for you.' 'Very well, very well,' he answered in a rage, and away he went in a huff, biting his nails for consolation. The second time, before he had arrived, a porter brought a little note, addressed to Mr. Charles. I suspected that he was once more physicked. We, Pipelet, and myself, were bursting with laughter when the commandant arrived. 'Commandant,' said I, carrying the back of my left hand to my periwig, like a real trooper, 'here is a letter; it appears there is counter-march again to-day.' He looked at me as proud as a peacock, opened the letter and read it, became as red as a crab, then said to us, pretending not to be put out, 'I knew no one would come; I only came to tell you to take good care of everything.' It wasn't true; it was only to conceal from us that he had been tricked; and thereupon he went shuffling off, singing, but he was vexed, I tell you. It is well done, commandant; that will teach you another time to give only

twelve francs for taking charge of your rooms." "And the third time?"

"Ah! the third time, I believe it was for good. The commandant arrived—a very fine young man, notwithstanding, and well dressed, and scented like a musk-rat. He hardly touched the ground, he was so much puffed up. He took the key, and said to us, as he went up stairs, in a lively and proud tone, 'You will inform this person that the door is very near.' Good; we were so curious to see this person, although we didn't reckon on her coming, that we went out of the lodge, to watch at the steps of the door of the alley. This time, a little blue hack, with the blinds down, stopped before the house. 'Good! it is she,' said I to Alfred; 'let us fall back a little, so as not to frighten her.' The coachman opened the door. Then we saw a little lady with a muff on her lap, and a black veil which concealed her face, and a handkerchief which she held over her mouth; for she appeared to be weeping; but no sooner were the steps let down, than, instead of getting out, the lady said a few words to the coachman, who, quite astonished, shut the door."

"This woman did not get out?" "No, sir; she threw herself back in the carriage, and placed her hands before her eyes. I rushed out, and before the man had time to mount to his seat, I said to him, 'Well, my good fellow, where do you come from?' 'From the Rue Saint Dominque, at the corner of the Rue Belle-Chasse.'"

At these words Rodolphe shuddered. The Marquis d'Harville, one of his best friends, overwhelmed by some secret grief, as we have stated before, lived just in this place. Was it the marchioness who was thus rushing to her ruin? Had her husband any suspicions? perhaps the sole cause of his secret grief. These doubts rushed to the mind of Rodolphe. Yet he well knew all the intimate friends of the marchioness, and he could not recall any one to mind that in any way resembled the commandant. After all, this young woman might have taken a hack at this place, without living there: nothing proved it to be the marchioness; nevertheless, he retained vague and painful suspicions.

His unquiet and absorbed manner had not escaped the porteress.

"Well, sir, what are you thinking about?" said she. "I was thinking why this woman came to the door, and then suddenly changed her mind." "What would you have, sir; an idea, a

fright, a superstition? We poor women are so weak, so cowardly," said the old woman, with an affected air of timidity. "It seems to me, that if I were secretly—Alfred—I should be obliged —take courage—several times before—but never, never, everlastingly never! poor dear. There is not an inhabitant of this earth that can boast—" "I believe you, Madame Pipelet; but this young person—" "I don't know she was young, for I only saw the end of her nose. Certain it is, that she went as she came, without drum or trumpet. If some one had given us ten francs, we could not have been more pleased." "How is that?"

"In thinking how the commandant would act there would certainly be something to laugh at—certainly. In the first place, instead of going at once and telling him that the lady was gone, we let him dance for an hour. Then I went up—I had on my list shoes; I reached the door; I pushed it—it squeaked; the staircase is as dark as a furnace, and so is the entrance to the apartments. Just as I entered the commandant took me in his arms, saying in an indolent manner, 'My angel—how late you come.'"

Notwithstanding the gravity of his thoughts, Rodolphe could not keep from smiling: above all in looking at the grotesque periwig and the horribly wrinkled and pimpled face of the heroine of this ridiculous mistake.

Madame Pipelet continued laughing and making wry faces. "Ha!" But you shall see. I answered not a word, I held my breath, I abandoned myself to the commandant; but all of a sudden he cried out, pushing me off, the beast! as much disgusted as if he had touched a spider: 'But who the devil are you?' 'It's me, commandant; Madame Pipelet, the porteress; that is the reason you ought to keep your hands off, and not take me by the waist, and call me your angel, and say I come too late. If Alfred was only here.' 'What do you want?' said he to me, furiously. 'Commandant, the little lady came just now in a carriage.' 'Well, show her up; are you a fool? Did I not tell you to send her up?' I let him go on—did not undeceive him. 'Yes, commandant, it is true, you told me to send her up stairs.' 'Well?' 'The little lady went away again.' 'Get out; you have said or done something foolish,' cried he, still more furious. 'No, commandant; the little lady did not get out of the carriage; when the coachman opened the door, she told him to take her back again.' 'The carriage can't be far off,' cried

rible anguish but a blind faith in the discretion and honour of this man, this unfortunate young woman would come to this rendezvous lost; and she would be obliged to confront the curious and bold regards of some miserable wretches, and perhaps hear their foul and vulgar jokes.

What disgrace! what a lesson! for a poor misguided woman who, until then, had only lived in the most charming, the most poetic illusions of love! And the man for whom she braved so much opprobrium, so many perils, would he be the least touched by the heart-rending anxieties he had caused? No! Poor woman! a blind passion had once more brought her to the borders of the abyss, from which a courageous effort of virtue saved her again. And what were the feelings of this man at the thought of this holy and sorrowful struggle? He was seized with rage and anger, in thinking that he had been inconvenienced three times for nothing, and that his ridiculous fatuity is gravely compromised in the eyes of—his porter. "Oh!" thought Rodolphe, 'what a terrible lesson if this woman (who is unknown to me, I hope) could have heard in what a vulgar manner they had spoken of a step, culpable without doubt, but which had cost so much love, so many fears, so much remorse."

And then, in thinking that the Marchioness d'Harville might be the heroine of this adventure, Rodolphe asked himself, "By what aberration of mind, by what fatality, could d'Harville, young, sensible, devoted, generous, and, above all, tenderly attached to his wife, be sacrificed by a being necessarily silly; an egotistical and contemptible miser. Could the marchioness be taken with the man's appearance alone; for he was said to be very handsome."

Rodolphe knew her, however, to be a woman of good feeling, mind, and taste, and of great elevation of character; never had there been the slightest whisper about her reputation. Where could she have known this man? Rodolphe saw her frequently, and he could not remember ever having met any person at the Hotel d'Harville that at all reminded him of the commandant. After a long reflection, he came almost to the conclusion that the marchioness had nothing to do with this affair.

Madame Pipelet, having finished her culinary duties, resumed her conversation with Rodolphe.

"Who lives on the second floor?" demanded he.

"It is the mother Burette, a great woman for cards. She can

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read in your hands just like a book. There are some people very so and so, who come to have their fortunes told, and she gains more money than she is worth; and, besides, fortune-telling is not her only trade."

"What does she do besides?"

"She keeps a little private pawnbroker's shop."

"How?" "I tell you this because you are a young man, and it cannot but help to strengthen your notion for living here."

"And why then?" "The season is coming when even the most cautious are sometimes pressed. Well, it is always convenient to have a resource in one's own house, instead of being obliged to run to my *aunt's*, where it is much more humiliating; for one goes there seen and known by the whole town."

"To your *aunt's?* She lend's, then, upon pawn?"

"How! don't you know? Come, come, trifler! You playing the innocent at your age!"

"I play the innocent? In what manner, Madame Pipelet?"

"In asking me if my *aunt* lends upon pawn."

"Because—" "Because all young men, arrived at the age of reason know that going to place anything at a pawnbroker's is called *going to see my aunt.*"

"Oh! I understand: your second floor lodger is a pawnbroker!" "Come, come, Mr. Know-nothing: certainly she is a pawnbroker, and not so dear as at the grand shops; and besides, there is no trouble at all—no papers, no tickets. For instance, you take to her a shirt which is worth three francs: she will lend you ten sous on it; at the end of eight days you'll bring her twenty: if not, she keeps the shirt. It is very plain, always even money: a child can understand it."

"It is very clear in effect; but I thought this kind of trade was forbidden."

"Ah!" cried Madame Pipelet, screaming with laughter; "you have just come to town, ain't you, young man? excuse me, but I speak to you like a mother, and as if you were my child."

"You are very kind."

"Without doubt this is forbidden; but if one only did what the law allowed, one would sit very often with one's arms folded. Mother Burette does not write, gives no receipts; there are no proofs against her; she laughs at the police. It is funny enough, I tell you, to see what is brought to her. You wouldn't believe

what she lends on sometimes! I have seen her advance money on a grey parrot, who swore like a trooper, the rogue."

"On a parrot? But what amount?"

"Stop a bit. He was known; it was the parrot of a postman's widow, who lives near here, in the Rue Saint Avoie, Madame Herblot; every one knew that she thought as much of her parrot as she did of her skin. Mother Burette said to her, 'I'll lend you ten francs on your bird, but if in eight days, at twelve o'clock, I haven't my twenty francs—' "

"Her ten francs."

"With the interest it made just twenty francs—always even money. 'If I haven't my twenty francs, and cost of feed, I give Jacquot a little salad of parsley, seasoned with arsenic.' She knew her customer well, I tell you. With this threat, Burette had her twenty francs at the end of seven days; and Madame Herblot carried off her horrid bird, who had bored our ears every day with his vulgar oaths, so much that Alfred blushed, for he is very modest. It is not strange for his father was a priest. In the revolution, you know, there were some priests who married nuns."

"And Burette has no other trade, I suppose?

"She has no other, if you please. And yet I don't know what kind of business she carries on in a little room where no one enters except Bras-Rouge and an old Borgnesse, who is called LaChouette."

Rodolphe looked at the porteress with astonishment. She, mistaking the look of surprise, said, "It is a funny name, ain't it, La Chouette?"

"Yes; and does this woman come here often?"

"She has not made her appearance for six weeks; but the day before yesterday we saw her; she limped a little."

"And what did she want with the fortune-teller?"

"Just what I don't know; but I have always remarked that on the days they have the secret conference in the little room, the Borgnesse always brings a bundle in her basket, and Bras-Rouge one under his cloak, but that they take nothing away."

"And these bundles, what do they contain?"

"I know nothing about it, except that they make with all this a *ratatouille* of the devil; for you can smell, in passing on the staircase, an odour of sulphur, and charcoal, and melted tin; and then you can hear them blow, like blacksmiths. Certain it is that Burette prospers either by her fortune-telling or magic; at least,

that is what César Bradamanté told me, the lodger on the third floor. He is an Italian, although he speaks French as well as you and I do, only he has a good deal of accent; but never mind, he is a nice man, who knows the simples, and who will take out your teeth, not for money, but for the honour. Yes, for pure honour. If you have six bad teeth, he will take out the first five for nothing; you must only pay for the sixth. It is not his fault if you only have the sixth."

"It is very generous."

"He sells, besides, a very good liquid, which keeps the hair from falling off, cures weakness of the eyes, corns on your feet, weakness of the stomach, and destroys rats without arsenic."

"And the proof that it is a good liquid is, that it is made from simples that Mr. César collected in the mountains of Lebanon, among a tribe of Americans who live there, and from whence also he has brought his horse, which looks so much like a tiger; he is all white, with brown spots. I tell you, when Mr. César Bradamanté mounts this beast, in his red dress, lined with yellow, and his hat and feathers, you'd pay to see him; for, speaking with respect, he looks like Judas Iscariot, with his long red beard. For a month past, he has hired the son of Bras-Rouge, the little Tortillard, whom he had dressed like a troubadour, with a black cap and an apricot-coloured jacket and collar. He beats the drum to attract customers around Mr. César; and, besides this, he takes care of the tiger horse of the dentist."

"It seems to me that the son of the principal tenant has a very modest employment."

"His father says he wishes this child to be held with a tight rein, otherwise he will dance on the scaffold; and truly he is a most wicked imp! He has played more than one trick on this poor César Bradamanté, who is the cream of honest people. Since he cured Alfred of the rheumatism we like him much. Well! there are some persons ill-natured enough for—but no—it would make your hair stand on end! Alfred says if it was true, it is a galley offence."

"Well?" "Ah! I dare not: I never shall dare to—"

"Don't say another word." "It is on the faith of an honest woman to say that to a young man."

"Let us talk no more about it, Madame Pipelet."

"Yet, as you are to be a lodger, it is better that you should be

advised that they are falsehoods. You are in a position to become a friend and neighbour of Mr. César; if you believe these stories you would look upon his acquaintance with disgust."

"Speak, I listen to you."

"They do say—when once a young person has committed a fault—you understand, don't you? and the consequences are feared—" "Well?" "Stop, I declare I can't tell any more." "But again." "No, no; and besides it is a malicious report." "Go on." "Lies." "Go on." "Slander." "But again." "People who are envious of the tiger horse of Mr. César." "Very well; but what do they say?" "I am ashamed to tell."

"But what relation is there between a young person who has committed a fault and the quack?"

"I don't say that it is true." "But in the name of Heaven what then?" cried Rodolphe, becoming impatient at the shuffling of Madame Pipelet.

"Listen, young man," continued the porteress in a solemn manner; you must swear to me on your honour, that you will never repeat this to any one?"

"When I know what it is, I will tell you, yes or no, to this oath."

"If I tell you this, it is not on account of the six francs you have promised me, nor on account of the cassis."

"Well, well." "It is on account of the great confidence I have in you." "Well." "And to serve this poor César Bradamanté in exculpating him."

"Your intentions are excellent, I don't doubt it; well?"

"It is said, then—but this must not go out of the lodge, at least." "Certainly: it is said, then—"

"Once more I say, I dare not; but stop; I'll whisper it in your ear: it will have less effect. What a child I am." And the old woman whispered some words in the ear of Rodolphe, who shuddered with affright.

"Oh! but this is horrible," cried he, rising by an involuntary movement, and looking around with terror, as if the house had been accursed.

"My God!" murmured he, in a low voice; "is it possible—such horrid crimes! and this hideous old woman, who is almost indifferent to the dreadful revelation she has just made."

The porteress did not hear Rodolphe, but went on, continuing to occupy herself with her household affairs.

"Is it not a heap of slanders? What! a man who has cured Alfred of the rheumatism; a man who has brought a spotted horse from Lebanon; a man who proposes to take out five teeth gratis, provided you pay for the sixth; a man who has certificates from all parts of Europe, and pays his rent to a farthing. Ah, well, yes. rather die than believe that."

During this time Madame Pipelet manifested her indignation against the calumniators, Rodolphe recalled to his mind the letter addressed to this man. An involuntary presentiment told him that these atrocious rumours were well founded.

"Ah, here is Alfred!" cried the porteress; "he will tell you, as I do, that they are slanderers who accuse him of such horrors, this poor César Bradamanté, who cured him of the rheumatism."

Mr. Pipelet entered the lodge with a grave and majestic air. He was about sixty years of age, with an enormous nose, a stout figure, a large face, shaped and coloured like a pair of nutcrackers of the Nuremburg pattern (shaped like a little man). This strange-looking head was covered with a broad-brimmed hat, red from age.

Alfred, who never went without this hat, any more than his wife went without her fantastic periwig, strutted about in an old green coat with immensely long skirts, the facings of which looked almost grey, so much were they covered with stains and dirt. Notwithstanding his hat and green coat, which gave him a certain air of dignity, Pipelet had not laid aside the emblem of his calling. An apron of leather half concealed a long waistcoat, variegated with as many colours as the harlequin counterpane of Madame Pipelet. The salutation that the porter made to Rodolphe was not wanting in a certain affability; but, alas! the smile of this man was bitter.

"Alfred, here is an applicant for the chamber and cabinet of the fourth story," said Madame Pipelet, presenting Rodolphe to her husband, "and we have only waited for you to drink a bottle of cassis which he has ordered."

This delicate attention inspired Pipelet with confidence in Rodolphe; the porter carried his hand to the front part of his hat, and said, in a bass voice, worthy of a cathedral chorister,

"We will satisfy you, sir, as porters, in the same way that you satisfy us as lodger; at least, if you are not a painter?"

"No; I am a shopkeeper's clerk."

"Then, I tender you my humble duties. I felicitate nature for not having placed you on a level with these monsters of artists!"

"Artists! monsters?" asked Rodolphe. Pipelet, instead of answering, lifted his two hands towards the ceiling of the lodge, and uttered a sort of angry moan.

"These are the people that have poisoned the life of Alfred; who have rendered him so melancholy," whispered Madame Pipelet to Rodolphe. Then, speaking loud and in a careless manner, she said, "come, Alfred, be reasonable, don't think about that blackguard; you'll make yourself sick; you won't be able to eat any dinner."

"No; I will have courage and reason," answered Pipelet, with a resigned and sorrowful dignity. "He has done me much harm; he has been my persecutor, my executioner, for a long time; but now I despise him. Painters!" added he, turning to Rodolphe, "oh! they are the pest of a house; they are its 'bacchanals,' its ruin."

"You have had a painter for a lodger?"

"Alas! we had one!" said Pipelet, with bitterness, "a painter who called himself Cabrion." At this recollection, notwithstanding his apparent moderation, the porter clenched his fists convulsively.

"Was this the last person who occupied the room that I am about to hire?" asked Rodolphe.

"No, no; the last lodger was a good, worthy young man, called Germain; but before him was this Cabrion. Ah! since his departure, he has almost made me mad, stupid."

"Did you regret him so much?" asked Rodolphe.

"Cabrion! regret!" answered the porter, in a stupor; "regret Cabrion! Why, now, just imagine, that Bras-Rouge paid him two terms to get him away; for we had been unfortunate enough to give him a lease. What a wretch! You can have no idea, the horrible jokes he played on us, and the other occupants. To speak but of one of these jokes, there is not a wind instrument of any description that he has not basely made his accomplice to debase the lodgers. Yes, from the hunting horn to the serpent, he has abused all, pushing his villainy so far as to play false, and to blow one note for hours together. Oh, it was enough to make one crazy. There were more than twenty petitions sent to Bras-Rouge, to turn the wretch out. Finally, they got rid of him by paying two terms.

It is droll, is it not? a lodger to whom one pays terms. But they'd have paid him three to shake him off. He went. Perhaps you think we are done with Cabrion? You shall see. The next evening at eleven o'clock I had gone to bed. Rat—tat—tat! I drew the cord. Some one came to the lodge. 'Good evening, porter,' said a voice; 'will you give me a lock of your hair, if you please?' My wife said to me 'it is some one who has mistaken the door. 'I answered the unknown: 'It is not here; ask next door.' 'Yes, ain't this No. 17? The porter's name Pipelet?' asked the voice. 'Yes,' I said 'my name is Pipelet.' 'Well, Pipelet, my friend, I have come to ask for a lock of your hair for Cabrion; it is a notion he has got; he sticks to it, he will have it.' "

Pipelet looked at Rodolphe, letting his head fall, and crossing his arms in a sculptural attitude.

"You comprehend? It is to me, his mortal enemy, that he impudently comes and demands a lock of my hair, a favour that even ladies often refuse to their well-beloved."

"Yet if this Cabrion had been as good a lodger as Germain, perhaps—" said Rodolphe, with great gravity.

"Even if he had, I would not have granted him the lock," said the man majestically; "it is neither according to my principles nor my custom; but I should have made it my duty, my law, to refuse him politely."

"And this is not all," said the porteress; "just figure to yourself, that since that day, morning, noon, and night, at all hours, this frightful Cabrion set on a host of ruffians, who came one after the other, to ask Alfred for a lock of his hair, always for Cabrion."

"And do you think I granted it?" said Pipelet, with a determined air; "they should have dragged me to the scaffold sooner! After three or four months obstinacy on their part, and resistance on mine, my energy triumphed over the brutality of these wretches. They saw they were attacking a bar of iron, and they were forced to renounce their insolent pretensions. But it is all the same; I have been wounded here!" Alfred laid his hand upon his heart, "if I had committed a horrid crime, I could not have had a more tortured sleep. At each moment I awoke, starting, thinking I heard the voice of the cursed Cabrion. I was suspicious of the whole world; in every one I saw an enemy; I lost my amenity, I could not see a strange face at my window without shuddering to think it might be one of the band of Cabrion; and be-

sides, even now I am suspicious, gloomy as a criminal. I fear to cheer myself up with a new acquaintance, from the dread of seeing start up some of the band of Cabrion; I have no enjoyment for anything."

Here Madame Pipelet carried her finger to her left eye, as if to chase away a tear, and made an affirmative sign with her head.

Alfred continued in a tone more sorrowful. "In short, I am shrivelling up; and it is thus I see flow the river of life. Was I wrong, to tell you that this infernal Cabrion had poisoned my existance?" And Pipelet, breathing a profound sigh, bent his head under the weight of this immense misfortune.

"I conceive, now, that you cannot like painters,' said Rodolphe; "but this Germain, at least, of whom you have spoken, must have made amends for Cabrion!'

"Oh! yes; he is a good and worthy young man, true as gold; ready to serve one, not proud and gay, but the right kind of gaiety, which does harm to no one, instead of being insolent and jeering, like this Cabrion, whom the devil confound!"

"Come, calm yourself, my dear Pipelet, don't pronounce that name. And now, who is the proprietor so happy as to possess this jewel of a lodger, Germain?"

"Neither seen nor known; nobody knows, nor will know, where, at this moment, Germain lives. When I say nobody—except Mademoiselle Rigolette."

"And who is Mademoiselle Rigolette?" asked Rodolphe.

"A little seamstress; the other lodger on the fourth story, said Madame Pipelet. "Here is another jewel! paying her term in advance; and so neat in her little room, and so good to everybody, and so gay—a true bird of heaven, so joyous, so lively; and, with all that, industrious as a little beaver, earning sometimes as much as two francs a day; but, forsooth! with much—"

"But how is it that Mademoiselle Rigolette alone knows the residence of Germain?"

"When he left the house," said Madame Pipelet, "he said to us, 'I don't expect any letters; but if by chance any should arrive, you will give them to Mademoiselle Rigolette;' and in that she was worthy of his confidence, even if the letter was charged; ain't she, Alfred?"

"The fact is, there is absolutely nothing to say against Mademoiselle Rigolette," said the porter, severely, "if she had not

had the weakness to suffer herself to be cajoled by that infamous Cabrion."

"However, that may be, Alfred," continued the porteress, "you know how well it was no fault of Mademoiselle Rigolette; that comes from the locality; for it was just the same with the travelling clerk who occupied the room before Cabrion. Once more I say, it cannot be otherwise; it comes from the locality."

"Thus," said Rodolphe, "the occupants of the chamber that I wish to hire necessarily pay their court to Mademoiselle Rigolette!"

"You can easily comprehend it. You are a neighbour of Mademoiselle Rigolette; the two rooms join. Well, among young folks there is a candle to be lighted, a little coal to borrow, or perhaps some water. Oh, as to water, you are sure to find plenty at Mademoiselle Rigolette's; she is never without it; it is one of her luxuries; she is a real little duck. As soon as she has a moment's leisure she is washing her floor and hearth. Thus it is always so neat and clean; you'll see."

"So, Germain, in consequence of his locality, has been, as you say, a good neighbour to Mademoiselle Rigolette?"

"Yes; you might say they were born for each other. So good, so young, it was a real pleasure to see them come down stairs on Sunday, the only holiday for these poor children, she dressed in a pretty bonnet and robe at twenty-five sous the yard, which she made herself, but which fit her like a little queen; he looking like a real beau."

"And Germain has never seen Mademoiselle Rigolette since he has left this house?"

"No; unless it might have been on a Sunday, for on other days Rigolette has no time to think of sweethearts, I tell you! she gets up at five or six o'clock, and works until ten, sometimes eleven, at night; she never leaves her room except in the morning when she goes to buy food for herself and her two canary birds; and the three don't want much, I tell you! With all this, good and charitable as in her power; with her time, sleep, and assistance; for, in working sometimes more than twelve hours a day, she just earns enough to live. Now, only think, those poor unfortunates in the garret that Bras-Rouge will put out on the pavement in three or four days, Mademoiselle Rigolette and Germain have sat up with their children for several nights!"

"There is, then, an unfortunate family here?"

"Unfortunate! Great God! I think so. Five young children, the mother in bed, almost dying, the grandmother an idiot; and to feed all these, a man who does not have even bread enough, although he works like a negro. Three hours sleep out of twenty-four is all he takes; and then, what sleep! when one is awakened by children who cry for bread; by a sick wife who is groaning on her straw bed; or by the old idiot, who sometimes begins to howl like a wolf, with hunger also, for she has no more reason than a beast. When she is very hungry, you can hear her on the staircase—she roars."

"Ah! this is frightful!" cried Rodolphe; "and does no one succour them?"

"Marry! one does what can be done among poor people. Since the commandant has given me twelve francs a month to take care of his room, I make soup once a week, and these poor folks always have a taste. Mademoiselle Rigolette sits up at night; to make, with shreds of stuff, caps and jackets for the little ones. This poor Germain, who hadn't much to spare neither, pretended to receive now and then a bottle of wine; and Morel drank one or two glasses, which warmed him famously, and for the time raised his spirits."

"And did the quack do anything for these poor people?"

"M. Bradamanté?" asked the porteress.

"He cured me of my rheumatism, it is true; I am grateful: but since that day I said to my wife, 'Anastasia, Bradamanté' —Hum! hum! didn't I say so, Anastasia?"

"It is true, you did say so: but he likes to laugh, this man, at least after his manner; for he doesn't open his teeth when he does it." "What did he do?"

"Well, now see: when I spoke to him of the misery of the Morels, because he complained to me that the old idiot had howled all night, and had prevented him sleeping, he said, 'Since they are so unfortunate, if they have any teeth to pull, I will not make them pay for the sixth; and besides, I will give them a bottle of my lotion at half price.'"

"Well!" cried Pipelet, "although he has cured me of my rheumatism, I maintain that is indecent pleasantry. But he always acts so; and, besides, if it were only indecent."

"Only think, Alfred, he is an Italian; and this is, perhaps, the way they joke in his country."

"Decidedly, Madame Pipelet," said Rodolphe, "I have a bad opinion of this man. I will not have any acquaintance with him. And the pawnbroker, has she been more charitable!"

"Hum! after the manner of Bradamanté, she lent them money on their poor clothes. Every thing went into her hands, even their last mattress."

Since Madame Pipelet had shown a sentiment of charity on account of the poor wretches of the garret, she seemed less repugnant to Rodolphe.

"And what trade does the poor workman follow?"

"Workman in false jewels; he works by the piece. And when there are seven mouths to fill without counting one's own, it is a dead drag; and, besides his eldest daughter does what she can; but it is not much." "And how old is this daughter?"

"Seventeen, and beautiful, beautiful as daylight; she is a servant to an old miser, rich enough to buy all Paris—a notary, called Jacques Ferrand."

"Jacques Ferrand?" said Rodolphe, astonished at this name, for it was at this notary's that he was to seek information respecting the friends of La Goualeuse. "Jacques Ferrand who lives in the Rue du Sentier?" continued he. "Exactly so! Do you know him?"

"He is the notary of the commercial house to which I belong."

"Ah! well, then you must know that he is a famous miser; but to be just, honest, and devout—every Sunday to mass and vespers, taking communion and going to confession. If he does frolic it is only with the priests, drinking holy water and eating holy bread—a holy man!—the saving's bank for poor people, who deposit their savings in his hands; but, miserly, and as tough for others as for himself. It is now eighteen months since this poor Louise was his servant. She is a lamb in disposition, but a horse for work. She does everything, and eighteen francs is all she gets—not a cent, more or less; she keeps six francs for her own support, and gives the rest to her family; she always does so; but what is that for seven persons to gnaw on?"

"But the father's labour—if he is industrious?"

"Industrious! He is a man that has never been drunk; correct, quiet as a lamb; who only prays to God to make the days forty-eight hours long, so that he can get a little more bread for his brats."

"His labour produces so little, then?"

"He kept his bed for three months; that's what got him behindhand; his wife ruined her own health in attending him, and at this moment, she is in a dying condition; during these three months they had to live on the twelve francs of Louise, and on on what they pawned with Burette, and also some covering lent them by the dealer in mock jewelry, for whom he worked. But eight people! I always think of that; and if you could see their den! Happily, Bras-Rouge is going to rid the house of them. When I say happily, it is not from hard-heartedness, at least. But, if they must be wretched, these poor Morels, and we can't do anything to help them, let them go and be wretched somewhere else. It will be a heart-ache the less for us."

"But if they are turned away from here, where will they go?"

"Marry, I don't know."

"And how much can this poor workman earn a day?"

"If he was not obliged to take care of his mother, his wife, and children, he would earn perhaps four or five francs; but as he loses three quarters of his time, at the very most he makes but forty sous." "Truly, little enough. Poor people!"

"Yes, poor people, it is well said. But there are so many poor people, that when one can do nothing, they must comfort themselves; ain't it so, Alfred?"

"Frankly, Madame Pipelet, what you have told me has touched my heart; you must drink my health with Pipelet!"

"You are very kind," said the porter; "but do you wish to see the room?" "Yes: if it suits me I'll take it."

The porter came out of his lodge, and Rodolphe followed him.

CHAPTER V.

THE FOUR FLOORS.

The dark and humid staircase appeared still more obscure on this gloomy winter's day. The entrance to each apartment of this house presented, to the eye of an observer, a most distinct and different appearance. Thus the door, which opened into the rooms of the commandant, was freshly painted a brown colour, in imitation of satin-wood; a gilt handle shone at the lock, and a fine bell-rope, with a crimson silk tassel, made a strange contrast with

the dirty and ancient walls. The door of the second floor which was occupied by the pawnbroker, and fortune-teller, presented a still more singular appearance: a stuffed owl, a bird supremely symbolical and cabalistic, was nailed by the feet and wings over the doorway; a little window, strongly grated with wire, allowed the visitors to be reconnoitered before opening the door. The apartment of the Italian quack was also distinguished by its singular entrance. His name, traced with horses' teeth on a black ground, was fastened against the door. Instead of terminating in a classical manner, with a deer's foot, the bell-rope was fastened to the arm and paw of a dried monkey. This withered arm, this little hand, with its fine outstretched fingers, was hideous to behold. It looked like a child's.

As Rodolphe passed before this door, which to him had a mysterious look he thought he heard stifled sobs; then all at once burst forth a sad, convulsive, horrible cry—a cry that appeared to be wrung from the heart, resounded throughout the quiet house.

Rodolphe shuddered. With a movement quicker than thought, he ran to the door and pulled the bell violently.

"What is the matter with you, sir?" said the surprised porter. "That cry!" said Rodolphe, "did you not hear it?" "Yes, sir. No doubt it is some patient from whom César Bradamanté is pulling a tooth—perhaps two."

This explanation was probable; yet it did not satisfy Rodolphe. This terrible cry, which he had just heard, did not seem to him only an exclamation of physical, but a cry of moral suffering. His pull at the bell had been of great force; at first it was not answered. Then many doors were shut with violence; and behind the bull's-eye glass, placed near the door, on which Rodolphe had mechanically fixed his eye, a thin face of ghastly paleness appeared; an immense mass of red and grey hair crowned this hideous visage, which was terminated by a long beard of the same colour. This vision disappeared at the end of a second. Rodolphe remained petrified. While this apparition appeared, he thought he had some rememberance of such a face.

Those green eyes sparkling like emeralds under their heavy, bristling, and red eyebrows; that livid paleness, that thin nose prominent and curved like the beak of an eagle, with wide and distended nostrils, all recalled to his mind a certain Abbé Polidori,

whose name had been cursed by Murphy during his conversation with the Baron de Graün.

Although Rodolphe had not seen the Abbé for seventeen years, he had a thousand reasons for not forgetting him; but that which rather puzzled him, which made him rather doubt the identity of these two personages, was, that the priest whom he thought he had found under the disguise of this quack, was of a very dark hair and complexion.

If Rodolphe (in supposing his suspicions were well founded) was not much astonished to see a man invested with a holy calling, whose high intelligence, vast learning, rare mind he perfectly knew, fallen to this point of degradation, perhaps of infamy, it is that he knew that these gifts were allied to a perversity so profound, conduct so disorderly, habits so intemperate, and, above all, such impudent quackery and outrageous contempt of men and things, that this man reduced to merited misery, must have sought out resources the least honourable, and found a sort of ironical and unholy satisfaction to see himself exercising the vile trade of an impudent mountebank. But we repeat, that although he had last seen the Abbé Polidoré in the flower of his days, yet there was between these two personages such a notable difference, that Rodolphe doubted extremely their identity; nevertheless, he said to Pipelet, "How long is it since Bradamanté came to lodge in this house?" "About one year, sir. Yes, about that; he came for the January term. He is a very punctual lodger; he has cured me of a famous rheumatism. But, he has a fault: he respects no one in his conversation." "How is that?" "In short, Sir," said Pipelet, gravely, "after he has jabbered indecently for a quarter of an hour in the lodge, about the women half clothed, of the different countries he has travelled through, and I find myself alone with Anastasia—well! I who have for thirty-seven years been accustomed to make it a law to cherish her—Anastasia—well! it seems to me that I cherish her less. However, I love my trade and I pride myself on it. I might have been a boot maker if such had been my ambition; but I think I render as much service by mending old ones—well! there are some days when this devil of a César, with his jokes, makes me regret that I am not a maker instead of a mender, on my word and honour. And then, besides, he has such a way of talking about these lady savages that he has known; now look

here—I am not a rosebud, but sometimes I blush like a girl.' "And does Madame Pipelet tolerate this?" "Anastasia is a giddy creature; she passes it all over." "She has told me of certain rumours." "She has told you?" "Be quite easy; I am discreet." "Well, that rumour I dont believe—never will believe it—and yet I can't keep from thinking about it; and that augments the singular effects of the droll jokes of Bradamanté: in a word, I certainly hate Cabrion: it is a hatred that I shall carry with me to the tomb. Well! sometimes it appears to me that I prefer the ignoble farces that he had the effrontery to play in this house, to the jokes César favours us with, in his *pinch-without-laughing* manner, in bridling his lips with a disagreeable movement, which always creates to my mind the death-bed of my uncle, who, with the rattles in his throat, bit his lips just like Bradamanté."

Some words of Pipelet, on the perpetual sneer with which the quack spoke of all and every body, and branded joys the most pure and modest with his infamous jeering, quite confirmed the first suspicions of Rodolphe; for the abbé, when he threw off his mask of hypocrisy, had always affected a scepticism, the most audacious and the most revolting. Quite decided to clear up his doubts—the presence of the priest in this house troubling him, and feeling more and more disposed to interpret this terrible cry differently from the porter, he followed him to the floor above, where he found the room he wished to hire.

The dwelling place of Mademoiselle Rigolette, next to this chamber, was easily to be recognised: thanks to a charming gallantry of the painter, the mortal enemy of Pipelet. A half-dozen chubby-cheeked little loves, very prettily and neatly painted in the style of Watteau, were grouped around a kind of workbox, and bore, allegorically, one a thimble, one a pair of scissors; this one a smoothing iron, that one a small mirror. In the middle of the box, on a clear blue ground, was written in rose-coloured letters, *Mademoiselle Rigolette, Mantua-maker.* The whole was enclosed by a garland of flowers, which stood out in bold relief with the sea-green colour of the door. This little affair was very pretty, and formed a striking contrast to the black staircase. At the risk of irritating the bleeding wounds of Alfred, Rodolphe said to him, pointing to the door of Mlle. Rigolette, "This, without doubt, is the work of Cabrion?" "Yes; he took the liberty of spoiling the paint of this door with these indecent daubings of naked children,

which he calls loves. If it had not been for the entreaties of Mlle. Rigolette and the weakness of Bras-Rouge, I would have scratched it all off, as well as this palette with which the same monster has obstructed the door of your chamber." And truly, a palette charged with colours, appearing to be suspended to a nail, was painted on the door, so as to be quite deceptive. Rodolphe followed the porter into this room, preceded by a cabinet, and lighted by two windows which looked into the Rue du Temple; some fantastic sketches, painted on the second door, had been scrupulously respected by Germain.

Rodolphe had too many reasons for occupying this room, not to engage it at once; he gave then, modestly, forty sous to the porter, and said, "This chamber suits me perfectly: here is the advance: to morrow I shall send some furniture; I suppose it is not necessary that I should see the principal tenant, Bras-Rouge?"

"No; he only comes here from time to time, except for his dealings with Burette. It is always with me that this is arranged; I shall only ask you your name?"

"Rodolphe." "Rodolphe what?"

"Rodolphe—nothing else, Pipelet."

"That's indifferent; it is not for curiosity I insisted; names and inclinations are independent."

"Tell me, Pipelet, ought I not, to-morrow, as a new neighbour, to go and ask the Morels if I can be of any service to them, since my predecessor, Germain, assisted them according to his means?" "Yes, you can do that; it is true, it will be of no great service to them, notwithstanding." Then, as if struck with a sudden idea, Pipelet exclaimed, looking at his companion in a very cunning manner, "I understand—I comprehend; it is a commencement which will end in your playing the good neighbour to the little neighbour alongside."

"But I certainly do count on it!"

"There's no harm, Sir; it is the custom; and stop, I am sure that Mlle. Rigolette has heard that some one was looking at the apartment, and that she is on the watch to see us go down. I'll make a noise on purpose, when I turn the key; look sharp as you pass along."

In effect, Rodolphe perceived that the door, so prettily embellished with the little "amours," was ajar, and he saw indistinctly through the narrow opening, the rosy end of a little turned-up

nose, and a large black eye, sparkling and curious; but as he slackened his pace, the door was shut quickly.

"Now I told you that she was watching us," continued the porter; then he added, "Pardon, excuse me, I am going to my little observatory."

"What is that?" "At the top of the ladder, is the landing-place, on which opens the door of Morel's garret; and behind the wainscot there is a little black hole where I keep some rubbish. As the wall is very much cracked, when I am in my hole I can see and hear them just as if I was in the room. It is not as a spy; just heavens! But I go to look at them sometimes, just as one goes to see a bloody melo-drame, and when I descend to my lodge, I find it like a palace. But say now, if you will permit, would you like to—before they go? It is very sad, but it is curious; for when they see you, they are like savages—it annoys them."

"You are very good, Pipelet; another day, to-morrow, perhaps, I will profit by your offer."

"At your convenience; but I must go up to my little observatory, for I have need of a piece of leather. If you wish to go down I will rejoin you." And Pipelet began to ascend the ladder, an undertaking sufficiently perilous at his age.

Rodolphe cast a parting glance at the door of Mlle. Rigolette, thinking that this young girl, the former companion of the poor Goualeuse, knew without doubt, the retreat of the son of the Brigand, when he heard in the lower story some one come out of the quack's room: he recognised the light step of a woman, and distinguished the rustling of a silk dress. For a moment he stopped for discretion's sake, and then, hearing nothing farther, descended. When he reached the second floor, he picked up a handkerchief on the last steps, belonging, no doubt, to the person who had just left the room of Bradamanté. Rodolphe approached one of the narrow windows which lighted the staircase, and examined this handkerchief, magnificently trimmed with costly lace; in one of the corners was embroidered an L and an N, surmounted with a ducal coronet. This handkerchief was literally soaked with tears. The first thought of Rodolphe, was to hasten that he might deliver it to the person who had lost it; but he reflected that this might be considered, under the circumstances, an inconvenient curiosity; he kept it; thus finding himself, without

wishing it, on the trace of a mysterious, and, without doubt, sinister adventure. When he reached the lodge he said to the porteress,—

"Wasn't there a woman who came down stairs just now?"

"No, sir. It was a fine lady, tall and slender, in a black veil. She came out of Mr. César's. The little Tortillard went to get a hack, which she got into. What astonishes me is, that the little rascal got up behind the carriage, perhaps to see where the lady goes to; for he is as curious as a magpie, and quick as a ferret, notwithstanding his lame foot."

"Thus," thought Rodolphe, "the name and address of this woman will be known by the quack, if he has ordered Tortillard to follow the unknown."

"Well, sir, does the room suit you?" asked the porteress.

"It suits me exactly; I have taken it, and to-morrow I will send some furniture." "May God bless you for having passed before our door, sir, we shall have one famous lodger the more. Pipelet will love you at once. You will make him laugh like Germain, who had always something funny to tell him, for he likes a laugh, the poor dear man; thus, I think before a month is passed, you will make a pair of friends." "Come, come, Madame Pipelet, you flatter me." "Not at all; what I say to you now is as if I had opened my heart to you. And if you are kind to Alfred, I shall be grateful: you shall see your little room; I am a lion for neatness; and if you wish to dine at home on Sundays, I'll cook you up a dish that'll make you smack your lips." "Agreed; Madame Pipelet, you shall take care of my room. To-morrow they will bring you some furniture, and I'll come and see it put in order."

Rodolphe took his departure. The results of his visit to the Rue du Temple were sufficiently important for the solution of the mystery which he wished to discover, and for the noble curiosity with which he sought the occasion to do good, and to prevent evil.

Mademoiselle Rigolette necessarily knew the residence of François Germain. A young woman, who, according to some indications, might be the Marchioness d'Harville, had given to the commandant another rendezvous, which would perhaps ruin her for ever. And for a thousand reasons, Rodolphe had the most lively interest in d'Harville, whose repose and honour seemed so cruelly compromised.

Finally, Rodolphe had involuntarily discovered some traces of an adventure, of which the quack César Bradamanté (perhaps the Abbé Polidori) and a woman who belonged, without doubt, to the highest circles, were the principle actors. Besides, La Chouette, recently discharged from the hospital, where she had been sent after the affair of the Allée des Veuves, had some private dealings with Madame Burette, pawnbroker and fortune-teller, who occupied the second floor of the mansion. Having collected this varied information, Rodolphe returned to his own house, Rue Plumet, putting off to the next day his visit to the notary, Jacques Ferrand. The same evening, Rodolphe was to go to a grand ball at the Embassy of * * *.

Before we follow our hero in this new excursion, we will cast a retrospective glance on Tom and Sarah, important personages in this history.

CHAPTER VI.

TOM AND SARAH.

Sarah Seyton, at that time widow of the Count M'Gregor, and about thirty-seven years of age, was of an excellent Scottish family, and daughter of a baronet.

Of a finished beauty, orphan at sixteen, Sarah had left Scotland with her brother Tom Seyton of Halsburg.

The absurd predictions of an old Highlander, her nurse, had aroused the two great faults of Sarah—pride and ambition—in promising her, with an incredible persistence of conviction, the highest destiny—of a sovereign! The young girl lent a willing ear to the predictions of her nurse, and constantly repeated to herself to corroborate her ambitious folly, that a fortune-teller had also promised a crown to the beautiful and excellent Creole, who was once seated on the throne of France, and who was queen by her charms and goodness, as others are by their grandeur and majesty. Strange thing! Tom Seyton, just as superstitious as his sister, encouraged these foolish hopes, and had resolved to dedicate his life to the realization of Sarah's dream—this dream, as dazzling as it was foolish.

With the assistance of the Almanac of Gotha, for the year 1819 Tom Seyton, made, just before quitting Scotland, an alphabetical list, with their ages, of all the unmarried kings and sovereigns

princes of Europe. The ambition of the brother and sister was pure of all ignoble means to attain their object; Tom was to assist Sarah in contriving the conjugal plot, by which she hoped to catch a crown. Tom was to be half concerned in all the stratagems, in all the intrigues which might bring about this result; but he would sooner have killed his sister than to have seen her the mistress of a prince, even with the certainty of a marriage reparation.

The kind of matrimonial inventory which resulted from the researches of Tom and Sarah was satisfactory. The Germanic Confederation furnished, above all, a contingency of young presumptive sovereigns. Sarah was a Protestant; Tom was not ignorant of the facility of the left-handed marriages, marriages otherwise legitimate, and to which he would be resigned for his sister, in the last extremity. It was then determined between them, that Germany should be the first field of their operations.

If this project appears impossible, these hopes insensate, we answer, that an unbounded ambition, much increased by a superstitious belief, is very rarely reasonable in its views, or staggered by impossibilities; besides, in recalling to mind certain contemporaneous facts from the august marriages between sovereigns and subjects, to the amorous loves of Miss Penelope Smyth and the Prince of Capua, one cannot but allow some probabilities of success to the views of Tom and Sarah.

The latter joined to wonderful beauty, great aptitude for the most varied accomplishments, and a power of seduction so much the more dangerous, as, with a hard and selfish heart, a cunning and wicked mind, a profound dissimulation, a determined and wilful disposition, she united all under the appearance of a generous, ardent, and impassioned nature. Her physical organization was quite as deceptive. Her large black eyes, now sparkling, now languishing under her ebony eyebrows, could feign the ardent gaze of the voluptuary, yet the burning aspirations of love never caused her heart to beat in her frozen bosom; no surprise of the heart or the senses ever could derange the merciless calculations of this cunning, egotistic, ambitious woman.

In arriving on the continent, Sarah, from the counsels of her brother, did not wish to commence her undertaking without first making a visit to Paris, where she desired to finish her education, and to soften down her English roughness, by mixing with the

most polished society. She was introduced into the best and most fashionable circles of the great world, thanks to the letters and kind patronage of the English Ambassadress and the old Marquis d'Harville, who had known in England the father of Tom and Sarah.

After a sojourn of six months in Paris, Sarah could compete with the Parisienne, for the piquant grace of her mind, the charm of her gaiety, and the provoking naiveté of the glance of her eye, the ingenuity of her coquetry, at once chaste and passionate.

Finding his sister sufficently armed, Tom set out with her for Germany, furnished with excellent letters of introduction.

The first state of the Germanic Confederation which was found on the itinerary of Sarah was the Grand-duchy of Gerolstein, thus designated in the Almanac of Gotha, for the year 1819:

Genealogy of the Sovereigns of Europe and of their Families.

GEROLSTEIN.

Grand-duke MAXIMILIAN RODOLPHE, born the 10th December, 1764. Succeeded his father CHARLES FREDERIC RODOLPHE, the 21st April, 1785. Widower, January, 1808, of Louisa, daughter of the Prince JOHN AUGUSTUS, of Burglen.

SON,—GUSTAVUS RODOLPHE, born 17th April, 1803.

Tom had sense enough to inscribe first on his list the youngest of the princes whom he desired for his brother-in-law, thinking that extreme youth was more easily seduced than riper age. And, besides, as we have said, Tom and Sarah had been particularly recommended to the reigning Grand duke of Gerolstein by the old Marquis d'Harville, infatuated, like every body else, with Sarah, whose beauty, grace, and charming manners he never could sufficiently admire.

The heir presumptive of the Grand duchy of Gerolstein, Gustavus Rodolphe, was scarcely eighteen, when Tom and Sarah were presented to his father.

The arrival of the young Scotch girl was quite an event in this little German Court, calm, simple, serious, and patriarchal. The grand-dnke, the best of men, governed his state with paternal kindness; nothing could be more materially, more morally happy, than this principality; its population, industrious and sedate, frugal and religious, presented "the type ideal" of the German character.

The grand-duke felt as much affection as gratitude for the old Marquis d'Harville; thanks to the letters of this last, Tom and

Sarah Seyton, of Halsburg, were received at the court of Gerolstein with a very marked and kind distinction. Fifteen days after her arrival, Sarah, endowed with a profound spirit of observation, had easily penetrated the firm, loyal, and open character of the grand-duke. Before she vanquished the son, an infallible business, she had wisely resolved to assure herself of the disposition of the father, who appeared to love his son so blindly, that for a moment Sarah believed him capable of consenting to a misalliance, rather than see his dear son eternally unhappy. But soon she was convinced that this affectionate parent would never depart from certain principles, certain ideas on the duties of princes. It was not on account of his pride; it was conscience, reason, dignity. Now a man of this energetic temperament, so much the more affectionate and good, as it is firm and stronger, never accedes to anything that touches his conscience, reason, or dignity.

Sarah was on the point of renouncing her undertaking in face of these obstacles almost insurmountable; but reflecting on the other hand, that Rodolphe was very young, that they praised his sweetness, his kindness of disposition, his character, at once timid and pensive, she thought the young prince weak and irresolute; so she persisted, then, in her project and hopes. On this occasion, the conduct of her brother and herself was a model of generalship.

The young girl sought to conciliate everybody, and, above all, those who might be jealous of her advantages; she made her beauty and grace forgotten by the modest simplicity with which she concealed them. Soon she became the idol, not only of the grand-duke, but of his mother the grand-duchess dowager, who, in spite of her ninety years, loved all that was young and charming.

Several times had Tom and Sarah spoken of their departure, but never would the sovereign of Gerolstein listen to the proposal; and to keep both the brother and sister, he begged the baronet, Tom Seyton, of Halsburg to accept the vacant situation of the first master of the horse, and he instructed Sarah not to leave the grand-duchess, who could not exist without her. After a long hesitation, combatted by the most powerful influence, Tom and Sarah accepted these brilliant propositions, and established themselves at the court of Gerolstein, where they had been about two months.

Sarah, an excellent musician, knowing the taste of the grand-duchess for the old masters, and among others for Gluck, sent for the works of this illustrious man, and fascinated the princess by her inexhaustible complaisance, and by the remarkable talent with which she sang those old airs, of a beauty so simple and touching.

Tom, on his part, knew how to render himself very useful in the employment the grand-duke had confided to him. The Scotchman was perfectly familiar with horses; he had much method and firmness, and in a short time completely reorganized the service of the stables, a service heretofore much neglected.

The brother and sister were soon equally loved, fêted, and caressed in this court. Sarah had besides, need for her future projects, to employ all her arts to make partisans. Her hypocrisy, clothed in the most attractive garb, easily deceived most of these loyal Germans, and the general affection of all soon sealed the excessive benevolence of the grand-duke.

And now behold our couple established at the court of Gerolstein, and honourably placed, without, as yet, anything said about Rodolphe. By a lucky chance, some days after the arrival of Sarah, he had set out on a tour of inspection, accompanied by an aid-de-camp and the faithful Murphy. This absence, doubly favourable to the views of Sarah, permitted her to dispose at her ease of the principal threads of the net that she was warping, without being restrained by the presence of the young prince, whose admiration, too open, might have awakened the fears of the grand-duke. On the contrary, in the absence of his son, unfortunately he never thought he had admitted to his intimacy a young girl of rare beauty and charming mind, who naturally would associate with Rodolphe every hour in the day. Sarah remained insensible to this reception so touching, so generous, to this noble confidence with which she was introduced to the bosom of this sovereign family. Neither this young girl nor her brother drew back a moment from their evil designs; they came knowingly to bring trouble and sorrow into this peaceable and happy court. They coldly calculated the probable results of the cruel divisions which they were about to sow between father and son until then tenderly united.

CHAPTER VII.

SIR WALTER MURPHY AND THE ABBE POLIDORI.

Rodolphe, during his childhood had been of a very frail constitution. His father reasoned thus:—

The English country gentlemen are generally remarkable for robust health. This advantage is derived from physical education; plain, rugged, rustic, it developes their strength. Rodolphe will soon be out of the hands of his nurses; his temperament is delicate; perhaps, in accustoming this child to live like the son of an English farmer, I shall strengthen his constitution. Sir Walter Murphy, a fine specimen of a Yorkshire country gentleman, was intrusted with this important task. The course he pointed out to the young duke answered perfectly to the views of the father. Murphy and his pupil lived for several years on a small farm, situated in the midst of woods, at some leagues distant from the city of Gerolstein, in a most salubrious and picturesque position. Rodolphe, free from all restraints of etiquette, engaged with Murphy in agricultural pursuits suitable to his age, living a quiet, sober, regular life, having for pleasure and relaxation the manly exercises of the chase, pugilism, hunting, and shooting. In the pure air of the meadows, woods, and mountains, the young prince seemed regenerated, shooting upward like a young oak; the unhealthy pallor of his cheeks gave place to the robust colours of health; although light and slender, yet he always endured the greatest fatigues. By his address, energy, and courage, he was soon able to wrestle, successfully, with young men much older than himself; he was then about fifteen or sixteen years of age.

His scientific education, naturally was neglected for the physical one, Rodolphe knew but little; but the grand-duke wisely thought that to expect much from the mind, it was necessary that the mind should be sustained by a strong physical organization; then, although instruction should come late, yet the intellectual faculties would be rapidly developed.

The good Murphy was no scholar: he could only give to Rodolphe some primitive instructions; but no one better than he could inspire a pupil with the consciousness of what was base, ignoble, and contemptible.

This hatred of vice, this energetic and salutary admiration of

virtue, took root for ever in the bosom of Rodolphe; later, these principles were violenly shaken by the storms of passion; but never were they torn from his heart. The thunderbolt strikes and shatters the tree, firmly planted, but the sap lives in its roots, and a thousand green branches soon cover the unsightly and withered trunk. Murphy gave, then, to Rodolphe, the health of body and mind: he made him robust, active, and hardy, sympathetical, with that which was great and good, repugnant to that which was wicked and bad.

His task thus admirably fulfilled, the squire, recalled to England by important business, left Germany for some time, to the great regret of Rodolphe, who loved him tenderly.

Murphy had agreed to return and fix himself permanently at Gerolstein with his family, as soon as he could arrange some important affairs; he hoped not to be absent more than one year. Reassured concerning the health of his son, the grand-duke thought seriously of his future education. A certain Abbé Polidori, a renowned physiologist, distinguished physician, historian, and very learned in the studies of physical and ordinary sciences, was intrusted with the cultivation of this rich, but virgin soil, so perfectly prepared by Murphy.

This time the choice of the grand-duke was unfortunate; his religion was cruelly concealed by the person who presented the abbé, and caused him to be accepted; he, a Catholic priest, as a preceptor for a Protestant prince! This innovation was very much disapproved by many, and thought to be a fatal presage to the education of Rodolphe. Chance, or rather, the abominable character of the abbé, realized a part of these sad predictions.

Impious impostor, hypocrite, sacrilegious despiser of all that is held most sacred among men; full of cunning and address, concealing the most dangerous immorality, the most frightful scepticism, under a pious and austere exterior; exaggerating a false Christian humility to conceal his insinuating suppleness; even so far that he affected an expansive benevolence, an ingenuous optimism to conceal the perfidy of his interested flattery; with a profound knowledge of mankind, or rather, being only experienced in the baser passions, the Abbé Polidori was the most detestible mentor that could be given to a young man. Rodolphe, abandoning with extreme regret the independent, animated life which he had led until then, with Murphy, for the ceremonious

usages of his father's court, and for musty books, held, at first, the abbé in great aversion. It could hardly be otherwise.

On leaving his pupil, the poor squire had compared him to wild young colt, full of grace and vigour, just taken from the prairies, where he had sported free and joyful, to be submitted to the bridle and spur, and to be taught to moderate and use his strength, which, until then, he had employed only to run and bound according to his caprice.

Rodolphe commenced by declaring to the abbé that he felt no inclination to study; that he had, before everything, need of exercising his arms and legs; to breathe the pure air of the fields; to rove over woods and mountains; besides, a good horse and gun seemed to him preferable to all the books in the world.

The priest answered his pupil, that there was in effect, nothing more tiresome than study, but that nothing was more clownish than the pleasures he preferred to study; pleasures entirely worthy of a stupid German farmer; and the abbé drew such a ridiculous picture of this simple and rustic life, that, for the first time, Rodolphe was ashamed to have found it so happy. Then he naively asked the priest how he should pass his time, if he loved neither the chase, study, nor the free life of the country.

The abbé answered him mysteriously, that he would instruct him by-and-bye. Under another point of view, the hopes of this priest were as ambitious as those of Sarah.

He began to endeavour to render himself agreeable to his pupil, and to cause him to forget Murphy by means of his condescension and obsequiousness. Rodolphe continuing to be refractory respecting the cause of science, the abbé concealed from the grand-duke the repugnance of Rodolphe for study; on the contrary, he boasted of his assiduity and his astonishing progress; and some few questions, prepared beforehand between him and Rodolphe, but which seemed altogether accidental, continued the grand-duke in his blind confidence.

By degrees the indifference with which the priest had at first inspired Rodolphe changed, on the part of the young prince, to a cavalier familiarity, very different from the serious attachment he had for Murphy. Soon Rodolphe found himself united to the abbé (although by very innocent causes) by the kind of ties which

unite two accomplices. Sooner or later he would despise a man of the character and age of this priest who could lie so unworthily to excuse the idleness of his pupil.

The abbé, besides, was too cunning to attack directly certain noble convictions, fruits of the education of Murphy. After having redoubled his railleries on the vulgarity of the pastimes of his early years, the priest, half laying aside his mask of austerity, had vividly excited his curiosity by a relation of the enchanting life led by princes of a time gone by; finally, ceding to the requests of Rodolphe, after a good deal of management, and many jokes on the ceremonious gravity of the court of the grand-duke, the abbé inflamed the imagination of the young prince by the exaggerated and highly-coloured recitals of the pleasures and gallantries which had illustrated the reigns of Louis XIV., the regent, and above all, Louis XV.

He assured this unfortunate boy, who listened to him with fatal avidity, that even excessive voluptuousness, far from demoralizing a prince happily endowed, on the contrary, often rendered him merciful and generous; for this reason, that fine minds are never more predisposed to benevolence and affection than by happiness.

Such conversations naturally cause frightful ravages in a young, ardent, and sinless soul; besides the abbé eloquently translated the odes of Horace, where this rare genius extolled with the most irresistible charm, the sweet delights of a life entirely devoted to love and sensuality.

In the midst of this religious and virtuous court, accustomed, from the example of its master, to honest pleasures and innocent enjoyments, Rodolphe, instructed by the abbé, already dreamed of the mad revels of Versailles, the orgies of Choisy, the violent voluptuousness of the "Parc-aux-Cerfs," and also, now and then, by way of contrast, of some romantic love. The abbé had not failed to show to Rodolphe that a prince of the Germanic Confederation should have no other military pretension than to send his contingency to the Diet. Besides, the spirit of the times was no longer for war. To let his days flow deliciously and lazily in the midst of women and the refinements of luxury; to refresh himself occasionally from these pleasures by the delightful recreations of the arts; to seek sometimes in the chase, not as a savage Nimrod, but as an intelligent epicurean, those fatigues

which double the chasm of indolence and sloth—such was, accoring to the abbé, the only possible life for a prince who could find a prime minister capable of devoting himself courageously to the irksome and heavy burthen of the affairs of state.

A year—eighteen months passed in this way. Murphy had not yet returned, although he announced his speedy arrival. The first repugnance conquered by the obsequiousness of the abbé, Rodolphe profited by the scientific attainments of his preceptor, and acquired, if not a very extensive education, at least a superficial knowledge, which, joined to a naturally quick and sagacious understanding, allowed him to pass for being much better instructed than he really was, and to do the greatest honour to the cares of the abbé.

Murphy returned from England with his family, and wept for joy on embracing his old pupil. At the end of some days, without being able to find ont the reason of a change which deeply grieved him, the worthy squire found Rodolphe cold and constrained towards him, and even ironical when he recalled to him their rude and hardy life. Certain of the natural goodness of heart of the young prince, advised by a secret presentiment, Murphy believed him for the moment perverted by the pernicious influence of the abbé, whom he detested from instinct, and whom he resolved to watch closely.

On his part, the priest, very much vexed at the return of Murphy, whose frankness he dreaded as well as his good sense and penetration, had only one thought, which was to ruin him in the estimation of Rodolphe. It was at this epoch that Tom and Sarah were presented and received at the court of Gerolstein with the most extreme distinction. Some time before their arrival, Rodolphe had set out with an aid-de-camp and Murphy to inspect the troops of some of the garrisons. This being entirely a military excursion, the grand-duke had thought it proper that the abbé should remain behind. The Priest, to his great regret, saw Murphy assume for some days, his ancient functions about the young prince. The squire counted much on this occasion to enlighten himself as to the cause of the coolness of Rodolphe. Unfortunately the latter, already proficient in the art of dissimulation, and believing it dangerous to let his ancient mentor penetrate into his projects for the future, evinced the utmost cordiality, feigned to regret sincerely the days of his early youth, and his rural pleasures, and almost completely reassured him.

Some days after the establishment of Sarah and her brother at the court of the grand-duke, Tom became very intimate with the Abbé Polidori. This priest avowed to himself, with great impudence, that he had a natural, almost involuntary affinity for rogues and scoundrels; thus, he said, without positively finding out the object of Tom and Sarah, he found himself attracted towards them by a sympathy too lively, not to suppose some diabolical design. Some questions of Tom Seyton on the character and former occupations of Rodolphe, enlightened him at once as to the views of the brother and sister; only he did not give the young girl credit for views so honest and ambitious. The arrival of this charming girl appeared to the abbé as a lucky hit. Rodolphe had his imagination inflamed with idle fables of love; Sarah would be the ravishing reality which should replace such charming dreams; for, thought the abbé, before arriving at the choice of pleasure or variety in voluptuousness, one begins almost always by an unique and romantic attachment.

According to the abbé it would be thus with Rodolphe and the Scotch girl. The latter would without doubt have an immense influence over a heart submissive to the enchanting charm of a first love. To direct, prepare this influence, and to make use of it to ruin Murphy for ever—such was the plan of the abbé.

Like a cunning man, he made the two ambitious pretenders understand that they must treat with him, being alone responsible to the grand-duke for the private life of the young prince. This was not all; they must mistrust an ancient preceptor who had accompanied him, then on a military inspection: this man, rude, rough, hedged in with absurd prejudices, had formerly great authority over Rodolphe and could become a dangerous overseer; and far from excusing or tolerating the charming follies of youth, he would feel himself obliged to denounce them to the severe morality of the grand-duke. Tom and Sarah comprehended in half a word, although they had not informed the abbé of their secret designs. At the return of Rodolphe and the squire all three, united by their common interests, were tacitly leagued against Murphy, their most redoubtable enemy.

CHAPTER VIII.

FIRST LOVE.

On his return, Rodolphe, seeing Sarah every, day became madly in love. Soon she avowed to him that she returned his love, although she forewarned, him that it would cause a great deal of trouble. They never could be happy! A too great distance separated them. Thus she recommended to Rodolphe the most profound discretion, for fear of awakening the suspicions of the grand-duke, who would be inexorable, and deprive them of their only happiness, that of seeing each other every day. Rodolphe promised obedience, and that he would conceal his love. The Scotch girl was too ambitious, too much on her guard, to compromise and betray herself in the eyes of the court. The young prince felt, also, the necessity of dissimulation. He imitated the prudence of Sarah. Their secret was perfectly well kept for some time. When the brother and sister saw the phrensied passion of Rodolphe at its height, and the increasing admiration, more difficult to conceal from day to day, on the point of breaking forth, and thus losing all, they brought forth their great "coup de main."

The character of the abbé authorizing this confidence, Tom made to him the first overtures on the necessity of a marriage between Rodolphe and Sarah; otherwise, added he very sincerely, he and his sister would immediately quit Gerolstein. Sarah partook of the love of the prince, but she preferred death to dishonour, and never could be anything else than the wife of his Highness. These pretensions stupefied the priest; he never had thought Sarah so audaciously ambitious. Such a marriage, surrounded by numberless difficulties, by dangers of all sorts, appeared impossible to the abbé; he told Tom frankly the reasons why the grand-duke would never consent to such an union. Tom listened to these reasons, and acknowledged their importance; but he proposed as a medium, which would conciliate all, a secret marriage, only to be declared after the death of the reigning grand-duke. Sarah was of a noble, an ancient house; such an union did not want for precedents; Tom gave the abbé, and, consequently the prince, eight days to decide. His sister could support no longer the cruel anguish of uncertainty; if she must renounce the love of Rodolphe, she should take this sorrowful resolution as promptly as possible.

As a motive for their hasty departure, which must then follow, Tom had addressed, he said, a letter to a friend in England, which was to be put in the office at London, and sent back to Germany; this letter would contain reasons for a return sufficiently strong, that Tom and Sarah would find themselves obliged to leave for some time the court of the grand-duke.

This time, at least, the abbé guessed the truth. Seeking always for something hidden, even in the most honest sentiments, when he knew that Sarah wished to make her love legal by a marriage, he saw in it a proof, not of virtue, but of ambition. Certain of not being deceived concerning the views of Sarah, the abbé remained much perplexed. After all, the wish that Tom had expressed in the name of his sister was very honourable. What did he ask? either a separation, or a lawful union.

By aiding this marriage, the abbé attached the prince and his wife by the ties of profound gratitude, or, at least, by the binding of a dangerous act. Doubtless all might be discovered, and he would then be exposed to the anger of the grand-duke; but the marriage would be concluded, the union valid, the storm would blow over, and the future sovereign of Gerolstein would be so much the more friendly towards the abbé for his having encountered so many dangers in his service. * * *

When the abbé proposed to Rodolphe that he should never more see the enchanting girl, unless he would consent to a secret marriage, he sprang upon the neck of the priest, and called him his saviour, his friend, his father. Had the church and minister been there, the young prince would have married her at once. The abbé, for his own reasons, took charge of everything. He found a clergyman, witnesses, and the union was secretly celebrated, during a short absence of the grand-duke, called to a conference of the Germanic Diet.

The predictions of the Scotch nurse were verified; Sarah married the heir to a crown. Without being less in love, Rodolphe became more circumspect, and, protected by Tom and the abbé, they conducted themselves with so much caution that they escaped all suspicion.

During the first three months of his marriage Rodolphe was the happiest of men; when reflection succeeded his transports, he coolly contemplated his situation, and did not regret being united to Sarah by indissoluble ties; he gave up, without regret his fu-

ture projects of a voluptuous life, of which he had so ardently dreamed, and he made, with Sarah, the finest projects in the world on their future reign.

In these remote hypothesis, the part of prime minister, which the abbé had destined for himself, diminished much in importance. Sarah reserved for herself those government functions; too imperious not to be ambitious of power and domination, she hoped to reign in the place of Rodolphe. An event impatiently expected by Sarah, soon changed this calm into a tempest. She was about to become a mother.

There was manifested by this woman exigencies at once new and frightful for Rodolphe; she declared to him, bursting into hypocritical tears, that she could no longer support the constraint with which they lived, a constraint that her situation rendered still more painful. In this extremity, she proposed resolutely to Rodolphe to confess all to the grand-duke; he was, as also the dowager duchess, more and more attached to Sarah. "Without doubt," added she, "he will be very indignant, will storm at first; but he loves his son so blindly, so tenderly, he has so much affection for him, that the paternal wrath will soon be appeased, and she would partake at the court of Gerolstein the rank which belonged to her, doubly belonged to her, as she was about to give an heir to the heir-presumptive of the grand-duke." This pretension frightened Rodolphe; he knew the profound attachment of his father for him; but he also knew the inflexible principles of the grand-duke as to the duty of princes. To all his objections Sarah answered unmercifully: "I am your wife before God and before man. In a short time I cannot conceal my situation; I wish no longer to blush for a position of which I am, on the contrary, so proud." Tom took the part of his sister. "The marriage is indissoluble," said he to his most serene brother-in-law. "The grand-duke may exile you and your wife from court; nothing more; now he loves you too much to resort to such a measure; he will rather tolerate what he cannot prevent." These arguments did not calm the anxieties of Rodolphe. In the interim Tom was charged by the grand-duke to visit some states in Austria. This mission, which he could not refuse, would not detain him over fifteen days at the farthest: he set out, to his great regret, at a very decisive moment for his sister. She was at once pleased and displeased at his departure; she lost the aid of his counsels, but also, in case all should be discovered,

he would be shielded from the rage of the grand-duke. Sarah was to keep Tom well informed day by day of the different aspects of an affair so important for them both, and, to correspond the more securely and secretly, they agreed upon a cipher. This precaution alone proves that Sarah had to keep her brother advised of other things besides her love for Rodolphe. In effect, this egotistical, ambitious woman, had not felt her icy coldness of heart melt before the passionate love she had created. Maternity was only a motive for more action on Rodolphe, and nowise softened this soul of iron. The youth, the fond love, the inexperience of this prince, almost a child, so perfidiously drawn into an inextricable position, inspired her with no interest; in her intimate conversations with Tom she complained with disdain and bitterness of the weakness of this young man, who trembled before the most paternal of German princes, who lived a long time. In a word, this correspondence between the brother and sister unfolded clearly their interested selfishness, their ambitious calculations, their impatience—almost murderous; and completely laid bare the secret of this dark plot, crowned by the marriage of Rodolphe.

A few days after the departure of Tom, Sarah was present at the levee of the grand-duchess dowager. Many of the ladies looked at her with astonishment, and whispered to their neighbours. The grand-duchess Judith, notwithstanding her great age had her hearing perfect and her sight good; this movement did not escape her. She called one of the ladies in waiting to her, and learned that Mlle. Sarah Seyton, of Halsburg, was thought to be rather less delicate and sylph-like than usual. The old princess adored her young protégée; she would have answered to heaven for her virtue. Indignant at the illiberality of these observations, she shrugged her shoulders, and said aloud from the end of the saloon where she was seated, "My dear Sarah, listen?" Sarah arose. It was necessary for her to pass through the circle of Ladies to reach the princess, who wished, with an all-benevolent intention, to confound the calumniators, and to prove to them that the figure of her favourite had lost none of its grace and pliancy. Alas! the most perfidious enemy could not have contrived a worse plan than the duchess contrived in her desire to defend her protégée. She came to her. It needed the profound respect due to the grand-duchess to repress the murmur of surprise and indignation that arose when the young girl crossed the circle.

Those the least suspicious perceived that which Sarah desired no longer to conceal: the ambitious woman had managed this scene in order to force Rodolphe to declare his marriage.

The grand-duchess, not willing to believe the evidence of her own senses, whispered to Sarah. "My dear child, you are frightfully dressed to day. You had a figure that I could clasp in my hands; you are no longer recognisable." * * *

We will relate at another time the consequences of this discovery, which led to such terrible and great events. But we will now say, what the reader has doubtless suspected—that La Goualeuse, (Fleur de Marie) was the fruit of this unhappy marriage, was the daughter of Rodolphe and Sarah—and that both of them thought her dead. * * * * * * * *

We must not forget that Rodolphe, after having visited the house in the Rue du Temple, had returned home, and that he intended, the same evening to attend a ball given by Madame the ambassadress of * * *

It is to this fête we will follow his highness the reigning Grand-duke of Gerolstein, Gustavus Rodolphe, travelling in France under the title of the Count de Duren.

CHAPTER IX.

THE BALL.

At eleven o'clock in the evening, a Swiss, in grand livery, opened the door of an hotel in the Rue du Plumet, to let pass a magnificent berlin, drawn by two superb horses with long manes, and of the largest size. On the seat, covered with a hammer-cloth edged with silken fringe, was seated a fat coachman, rendered still larger by a blue furred coat with a collar of marten, all the seams laced with silver, and decorated with frogs of the same material. Behind the carriage a gigantic and powdered footman, dressed in a blue and silver livery, accompanied a chasseur with formidable moustaches, laced like a drum-major, and whose chapeau, extensively embroidered, was half concealed by a plume of yellow and blue feathers. The lamps shed a vivid light in the interior of this vehicle, lined with satin, where could have been seen Rodolphe seated on the right, having on the left the Baron de Graün; and opposite, the faithful Murphy. Out of deference to the sovereign,

who was represented by the ambassador where he was going, Rodolphe wore on his coat only the diamond crown of the order of * * *. The orange riband and the enamelled cross of "Grand Commander of the Golden Eagle of Gerolstein" hung from the neck of Sir Walter Murphy. The Baron de Graün was decorated in the same manner.

"I am really quite happy," said Rodolphe, "for the good news that Madame Georges gives me concerning my poor little protégée of the Boqueval farm; the treatment of David has done wonders. Except for the sadness which overwhelms this unfortunate child, she is much better; and speaking of Marie, acknowledge, Sir Walter Murphy," added Rodolphe, smiling, "that if one of your acquaintances of the cité should see you thus *disguised*, valiant coalman, she would he much astonished." "But I think, my lord, that your highness would cause the same surprise, if you would go to night to the Rue du Temple, and make a friendly visit to Madame Pipelet, for the purpose of diverting the melancholy of this poor Alfred, who only asks to love you, as this inestimable porteress said to your highness."

"My lord has so perfectly described Alfred, with his majestic green coat, his doctorial air, and his immovable broad brimmed chapeau," said the baron, "that I think I see him on his throne in the obscure and smoky lodge. Besides, your highness is, I dare hope, satisfied with the information of my secret agent? His house in the Rue du Temple has completely answered the expectations of my lord?" "Yes," said Rodolphe, "I have even found more than I expected." Then, after a moment's silence, and to drive away the painful thoughts which were caused by his fears for Madame d'Harville, he continued in a more cheerful tone, "I dare not avow this childishness, but I find enjoyment in these contrasts; one day a fan painter, sitting down in a dirty room in the Rue aux Fêves; this morning as a clerk, offering a glass of cassis to Madame Pipelet; and to night, one of the privileged who reign in this lower world."

A shade of gloom overspread the features of Rodolphe; and, buried in sad reflection, he remained silent until the moment that the carriage entered into the court of the embassy. Lights gleamed from every window of this immense hotel; a row of servants in grand livery extended from the door-way and antechambers to the waiting-room, where were placed the valets de

chambre. All was arranged in a splendid and royal manner. The count and countess had remained in their first reception room until the arrival of Rodolphe. He soon entered, followed by Murphy and Baron de Graün. Rodolphe was then about thirty-six years of age; but although he approached the middle of life, the perfect regularity of his features, "almost too handsome for a man," and his air of affable dignity, would always have rendered him extremely remarkable, even if these advantages had not been enhanced by the eclat of his rank. When he appeared in the first saloon of the embassy, he seemed transformed; it was no longer the blustering look, the quick and bold bearing of the fan painter, the conqueror of the Chourineur; it was no longer the merry clerk who sympathized so gaily with the misfortunes of Madame Pipelet. It was a prince, in the poetic ideality of the word.

Rodolphe carried his head erect and proudly, his chesnut hair curling naturally around his broad and noble forehead; his expression sweet, and yet dignified; if he spoke to any one, with the kindness so natural to him, his smiles, full of charms, displayed his beautiful teeth, which the dark colour of his slight moustache, rendered still more dazzling; his brown whiskers surrounded his face, of a perfect oval, uniting under his dimpled chin, which was slightly prominent.

He was dressed very plainly. His cravat and waistcoat were white. A blue coat, quite closely buttoned up, with the diamond order on the left breast, displayed his figure to great advantage.

Rodolphe went so little into society, and he had such a princely air, that his arrival produced a certain sensation; every look was turned towards him when he appeared in the first saloon of the embassy.

An attaché, charged to watch his arrival, went immediately to inform the countess * * *, who, with her husband, advanced to meet Rodolphe, saying, "I do not know how to express to your highness all my gratitude for the honour which your highness deigns to favour me with this evening."

"You know, Madame, that I am always desirous to pay my respects to you, and very happy to say to the Ambassador how much I esteem him; for we are old acquaintances."

"Your highness is too kind in recollecting it; it gives me a new motive never to forget your goodness."

"I assure you, Count, that it is not my fault if certain recollections are always before me; I have the happiness of only remembering what is agreeable to me."

"Then your highness is most marvellously endowed," said the countess, smiling.

"Am I not, Madame? Thus, some years hence, I will have, I hope, the pleasure to recall to you this day—all the taste and extreme elegance which preside over this fête. For, frankly, I can whisper in your ear, that you alone know how to give balls." "My lord!" "And this is not all: tell me, why it is that the women always appear so much handsomer here than anywhere else? "It is because your highness extends to them the same good-will with which we are honoured."

"Permit me to differ with you, Count; I believe that it is wholly referable to the Countess!"

"Will your highness have the goodness to explain this to me?" said the Countess, smiling.

"It is very plain, Madame; you know how to receive all these fine ladies with an urbanity so refined, with a grace so perfect; you say to each a word so charming and so flattering, even to those who do not altogether merit this amiable complaisance," said Rodolphe, with a slight smile of malice, "and they are so much the more delighted for being distinguished by you, because those who do merit it are so much the less delighted at your appreciation. This grateful satisfaction reflects from every countenance; happiness renders things the least agreeable attractive; and this is the reason, Countess, that women appear so much prettier in your saloons than elsewhere. I am sure that your excellency thinks as I do." "Your highness gives me too many good reasons to think as he does, that I should not acknowledge it."

"And I, my lord," said the countess, "at the risk of becoming as pretty as these fine ladies who do not merit the compliments one pays them, I accept the flattering explanation of your highness with as much gratitude and pleasure as if it were real."

"To convince you, Madame, that nothing is more true, let us make some observations on the effects of flattery on the countenance." "Ah; my lord, it would be a horrible snare," said the Countess, laughing.

"Come, Madame, I renounce my project but on one condition;

it is that you will permit me to offer you my arm. I have heard of a flower-garden, truly fairy-like, in the month of January; will you be kind enough to conduct me to this wonder of the Arabian Nights?" "With the greatest pleasure, my lord: but you have heard an exaggerated account. Your highness, however, can judge for yourself, at least, if your habitual indulgence does not abuse." Rodolphe offered his arm to the Ambassadress and entered, with her, the other saloons, while the Count * * * conversed with the Baron de Graün and Murphy, whom he had known for a long time.

On reaching this charming winter garden, Rodolphe could not refrain from an exclamation of surprise, and said to the Ambassadress, "Truly, Madame, I could not have believed such a wonder possible. It is not only great luxury joined to good taste, but it is poetry in action. Instead of describing like a poet, of painting like a painter, you create what one would scarcely dream."

"Your highness is a thousand times to good."

"Frankly, you must acknowledge, that he who would know how to describe faithfully this enchanting picture, with its charms of colour and contrast—there the splendid tumult, here this delicious retreat—admit Madame, that, be he painter or poet, he would make an admirable work, and that only in producing yours."

"The praises with which the indulgence of your highness inspires you, are so much the more dangerous, as one cannot prevent one's-self from being charmed by them, and listening to them with extreme pleasure in spite of one's-self. But look, my lord, what a charming young woman! Your highness will allow, at least, that the Marchioness d'Harville must be handsome everywhere. Is she not ravishing with grace? Does she not gain much from contrast with the severe beauty who accompanies her?"

The Countess Sarah M'Gregor and the Marchioness d'Harville descended at this moment the steps which led from the gallery to the garden.

CHAPTER X.

THE RENDEZVOUS.

The praises of the Ambassadress respecting the Marchioness d'Harville were not exaggerated. Nothing can give an idea of

that enchanting face, blooming then in all the freshness of delicate beauty—a beauty so much the more uncommon, as it existed less in the regularity of features than in the inexpressible charm of the aspect of the marchioness, whose lovely countenance concealed itself, as it were, under a touching expression of goodness.

Too worthy, too eminently endowed to seek homage, Madame d'Harville showed herself equally grateful to those who rendered it to her, as if she had not deserved it; she did not pride herself on it, but it made her happy; indifferent to praise, but very sensible to benevolence, she perfectly distinguished flattery from sympathy.

Her complexion, of dazzling fairness, was shaded by the long curls of her brown hair which fell on a neck of marble. It were difficult to describe the angelic beauty of her grey eye, fringed with long black lashes. Her rosy mouth of transcendent sweetness, was to these charming eyes that which her affable and touching conversation was to their sad and mild expression. She wore a robe of white crape, trimmed with natural camelias, and leaves from the same plant: among which, diamónds, half concealed, here and there shone, like so many drops of sparkling dew. A similar garland was placed gracefully on her pure and white forehead. The style of beauty of the Countess Sarah M'Gregor heightened that of the Marchioness d'Harville. About thirty-six years of age, Sarah appeared hardly thirty. Nothing seems more healthful to the body than cold egotism; one is preserved fresh for a long time in this kind of ice.

The Countess M'Gregor wore a robe of watered silk, under a tunic of straw-coloured crape; a simple crown of the natural leaves of a pyrrhus of emerald green surrounded her brow, and harmonized wonderfully with her bands of black hair, which was divíded on her forehead: this severe 'coiffure' gave an antique cast to the imperious profile of this woman.

Sarah thought, and not without reason, that she had a perfectly royal air: she must adhere to the predictions of the old Highlander, which were only half realized, and persist in the belief of sovereign destiny.

The Marchioness and Sarah had perceived Rodolphe in the garden, at the moment they entered; but the prince appeared not to see them, for he turned into another walk as they approached him.

"The prince is so much occupied with the Ambassadress," said Madame d'Harville to Sarah, "that he does not see us."

"Do not believe that, my dear Clemence," answered the Countess, who was very intimate with Madame d'Harville; "the prince, on the contrary, has seen us distinctly; but I made him afraid. His pouting still continues."

"Less than ever can I comprehend his desire to avoid you: often have I reproached him with the strangeness of his conduct towards you, an old friend."

'"The Countess Sarah and I are mortal enemies,' he answered, laughing, 'I have made a vow never to speak to her, and it must needs be a very sacred vow, that makes me deprive myself of the mediation of so amiable a person.' Thus, my dear Sarah, as singular as this answer appeared to me, I was obliged to be content with it." (The love of Rodolphe for Sarah, and the events which succeeded, having taken place eighteen years previous, were unknown in the fashionable world—both parties having their own reasons for concealing it.) '"I assure you, that the cause of this quarrel, half comic, half serious, is nevertheless, most innocent. If a third person was not interested, I should confide to you this great secret. 'But what is the matter' my dear child? you appear abstracted!"

"It is nothing; it was so warm just now in the gallery, that I felt slightly indisposed: let us sit down a moment here; it will pass over, I hope."

"You are right; ah, here is an obscure corner; you will be there perfectly secure from the researches of those whom your absence will drive to despair," said Sarah, smiling, and laying an emphasis on these words. They both seated themselves on a divan. "I said, those whom your absence will drive to despair, my dear Clemence; don't you thank me for my discretion?" The young woman slightly blushed, held down her head, but made no answer.

"How unreasonable you are!" said Sarah, in a tone of friendly reproach. "Have you no confidence in me, child? without doubt I am of an age to call you daughter."

"I want confidence in you!" said the marchioness to Sarah, sadly; "have I not rather said to you what I never dared to say to myself?"

"Wonderful; well! let us see—speak of him: you have then sworn to drive him to desperation—to death?"

"Ah!" cried Madame d'Harville, with affright, "what do you say?"

"You don't know him yet, poor child. He is a man of great energy, to whom life is of little value; he has always been so unfortunate. And they say you take pleasure in tormenting him!"

"Do you think so? My God!"

"You do not intend it perhaps, but so it is. Oh, if you knew how sadly sensitive and susceptible those are whom great misfortunes overwhelm! Really, just now, I saw two large tears roll in his eyes."

"Can it be true?"

"Certainly, and that in the midst of a ball, and at the risk of ridicule, if he had been perceived. Do you know that one must love deeply to suffer thus, and above all, not to think of concealing from the world that one suffers thus?"

"In mercy, do not speak to me of this," answered Madame d'Harville, in a trembling voice; "you give me pain. I too well know this expression of suffering, at once so tender and resigned. Alas! it is the pity he has inspired me with, which has ruined me," said Madame d'Harville, involuntarily. Sarah appeared not to have understood the meaning of this last word, and answered,

"What exaggeration! ruined, because you have coquetted with a man, who pushes descretion and reserve so far as not to be presented to your husband, for fear of compromising you! Mr. Charles Robert, is he not a man of soul, honour, and delicacy? If I defend him with warmth, it is because you have become acquainted with him at my house, and that he has as much respect for you as attachment."

"I have never doubted his noble qualities, you have always spoken so well of him. But you know that it is his misfortunes that have rendered him interesting in my eyes."

"And how much does he merit and justify this interest? avow it. And besides, such an admirable face, must it not be the mirror of the soul? With his tall and fine figure, he calls to my mind the times of the 'preux chevaliers.' I saw him once in uniform; no one could make a finer appearance, certainly, if nobility was to be obtained by merit and figure, Mr. Charles Robert would be duke and peer. Would he not marvellously represent one of the great names of France?"

"You are not ignorant that nobility of birth finds but little favour in my eyes; you, who reproach me too often with being a little republican," said Madame d'Harville, smiling.

"Assuredly, I have always thought, like you, that Mr. Charles had no need of titles to make himself agreeable; and, besides, what talent; what a charming voice! What a treasure he has been to us in our morning concerts! Do you remember the first time you sang together, what expression in the duet he sang with you! what emotion;"

"Stop, I beg you," said Madame d'Harville, after a long silence; "let us change the conversation."

"Why?"

"All this makes me very sad—what you told me just now of his desperate manner." "I assure you that, in the excess of sorrow, such a character might seek relief in death." "Oh! I beg you, stop! stop!" said Madame d'Harville, interrupting Sarah; "this thought has already struck me. Once more let us speak of something else—of your mortal enemy," added she, with an affected gaiety; "let us talk of the prince, whom I have not seen for a long time. Do you know he is charming, although almost a king! All republican as I am, I find but few men so agreeable as he is."

Sarah cast by stealth a scrutinizing and suspicious glance at Madame d'Harville, and answered gaily, "You must acknowledge, my dear Clemence that you are very capricious. I have known in you feelings of admiration and aversion towards the prince, that are very singular. Some months since, when he first arrived here, you were so much taken, that, between us, I feared a moment for your heart." "Thanks to you, at least," said Madame d'Harville, smiling, "my admiration was not of very long duration; you played so well the part of mortal enemy, you told me so many things about the prince, that I acknowledge indifference took the place of the admiration which made you fear for my heart; a fear that your enemy took no trouble to keep alive: for a short period after your revelations, the prince, while he continued to see my husband intimately, almost ceased to honour me with his visits."

"Apropos! and your husband; is he here to-night?" said Sarah. "No! he did not wish to come out," answered Madame d'Harville, with embarrasment.

"It seems to me that he goes less and less into society."

"Yes: sometimes he prefers to remain at home." The Mar-

chioness was visibly embarrassed; Sarah perceived it, and continued.

"The last time I saw him, he seemed paler than ordinary."

"Yes; he had been rather unwell." "My dear Clemence, do you wish me to be frank with you?"

"Yes; I beg of you."

"Whenever your husband is spoken of, you appear to be singularly agitated.

"I! what folly!"

"Sometimes, in speaking of him, your countenance expresses —My God! how shall I tell you this!" and Sarah, laying great stress on the following words, and looking as if she would read the very heart of Clemence, continued, "Yes, your face expresses a kind of fearful repugnance."

The impassible features of Madame d'Harville at first defied the inquisitive glance of Sarah. However, this last perceived a slight nervous trepidation, almost invisible, which agitated a moment the lower lip of the marchioness. Not wishing to push these investigations farther, and awaken the suspicions of her friend, the countess hastened to add "Yes, a fearful repugnance: such as a jealous peevish husband would inspire."

At this interpretation, the slight convulsive movement of the lip ceased: she appeared relieved from an enormous weight, and answered,

"But no, d'Harville is neither peevish nor jealous." Then, seeking, doubtless, a pretext for breaking a conversation which was irksome to her, she cried, "Ah! my God! here is that insupportable Duke de Lucenay, one of my husband's friends. I trust he will not see us! where does he come from? I thought him a thousand leagues off." "Yes, he was said to be off on a voyage of a year or two in the East; he has not been gone more than five months. Here is a sudden arrival, which must annoy the duchess, although the duke is not very troublesome," said Sarah, with a wicked smile. "She will not, however, be alone in confounding this unlucky return. M. de Saint Remy will partake of her sorrow." "Don't be slanderous, my dear Sarah; rather say that this return will be sorowful to every one. The duke is disagreeable enough for you to generalize the grief."

"Slanderous? certainly not; I am only an echo. Besides they do say that Saint Remy, the model of fashion, who has dazzled all

Paris with his ostentation, is almost ruined, although he goes on as usual; it is true that the Duchess de Lucenay is very rich."

"Oh! how shocking!"

"I repeat I am but an echo—ah! my God! the duke has seen us. He comes, we must be resigned. It is afflicting; I know nothing in the world more insupportable than this man; he is such bad company; he laughs so loud at his own jokes; he is so noisy that he almost deafens one; if you have any affection for your smelling-bottle or your fan, keep them from him; for he has the inconvenient fashion of breaking everything he touches, and that with the most frolicsome and satisfied air in the world."

Belonging to one of the most noble houses of France, still young, with a face which would not have been disagreeable except for the length of his nose; the Duke de Lucenay, joined to a boisterous noise and perpetual agitation a voice and laugh so astounding, witticisms so detestable, attitudes so gross and unexpected, that it was necessary at each moment to recal his name to prevent surprise at seeing him in the midst of the most distinguished society of Paris, and to understand how his eccentricities of language and gesture could be tolerated for a moment. They fled from him like the plague, although he was not wanting in a certain wit, which hit here and there, through a most incredible exuberance of words. He was one of those avenging beings, into the hands of whom one would always wish to see fall those who are odious and ridiculous.

The Duchess de Lucenay, one of the most agreeable, and yet one of the most fashionable in Paris, notwithstanding her thirty years, had made herself much talked about; but her levity of conduct was almost excused, in reflecting on the insupportable behaviour of the duke. As soon as the latter perceived Madame d'Harville and Sarah, he bellowed out, "Well! well! what is all this? what do I see—how? the prettiest women of the ball hiding away in a corner! is it permitted? Must I come from the antipodes to put a stop to such scandal? If you continue to conceal yourself from the general admiration, marchioness, I'll scream like a burned child; I'll cry at the loss of the most charming ornament of this fête!"

And, by way of peroration, he threw himself backward alongside of the marchioness, on the divan; after which he cross-

ed his left leg on his right thigh, and took his foot in his hand. "How, sir, have you already returned from Constantinople? said Madame d'Harville, drawing back with a movement of impatience.

"Already? You say just what my wife thinks, I am sure, for she would not accompany me to-night on my re-entry into society. To return, and surprise your friends, and be received in this way!"

"It is quite plain—it was so easy for you to remain amiable there," said Madame d'Harville, with a half smile.

"That is to say, remain absent, is it not? Oh, it is shameful, infamous, what you have just said!" cried the duke, uncrossing his legs, and drumming on his hat like a tabor. "For the love of Heaven, do not scream so loud; and keep yourself quiet, or you will compel us to leave our seats," said Madame d'Harville, with temper.

"Leave your seats! it will be to give me your arm, and take a turn in the gallery?"

"With you? certainly not. Come, I beg you will not touch this bouquet; I pray you leave this fan alone; you will break it, according to custom." "If it is only that, I have broken more than one—go along! yes, above all, a splendid Chinese affair, that Madame de Vaudemont gave to my wife." In speaking these reassuring words, the Duke busied himself in pulling towards him some of the climbing plants. He at length detached them from the trees which sustained them; they fell, and the duke remained, as it were, crowned in the luxuriant foliage. Then he burst into a shout of laughter so shrill, so mad, so deafening, that Madame d'Harville would have fled from this noisy and disagreeable person, if she had not perceived Mr. Robert (the commandant, as Madame Pipelet called him) advancing from the other extremity of the walk. The young woman feared that it might appear as if she went to meet him, and remained alongside of the duke.

"I say, Madame M'Gregor, I must look like the god Pan, like a naiad, like a sylvan, under this foliage?" said the duke, addressing Sarah, seating himself roughly beside her.

"Hallo! Mr. Charles Robert!" continued the duke. "I met him in the Pyrenees—a shining young man; he sings like a swan. You shall see, marchioness, how I'll intrigue him. Shall I pre-

sent him to you?" "Keep silent, and leave us quiet," said Sarah.

"While Mr. Robert advanced slowly, pretending to admire the flowers, the duke had manœuvred to get possession of the 'flacon' of Sarah, and he busied himself very quietly in endeavouring to break the stopper of this 'bijou.' Mr. Robert gradually approached; his tall figure was in perfect proportion, his complexion of irreproachable purity, his dress of supreme elegance; yet his face, his finish, was wanting in grace and distinction; his bearing was stiff, constrained, his hands and feet large and vulgar; when he perceived Madame d'Harville, the regular nothingness of his features was concealed at once under an expression of profound melancholy, much too sudden not to be feigned; nevertheless, this seeming was perfect. Mr. Robert had the appearance of being so frightfully unhappy, so naturally desolate, when he drew near to Madame d'Harville, that she could not but think of the sinister words of Sarah on the excesses to which despair might carry him. "Ah! good day, then, my dear sir!" said the duke, stopping him as he was passing; "I have not had the pleasure of seeing you since I met you at the springs. But what is the matter? How ill you look!"

Here Mr. Robert cast a long and melancholy look on Madame d'Harville, and answered the duke, with a voice plaintively accentuated, "Truly, sir, I am suffering." "My God! you cannot, then, get rid of your asthma?" asked the duke, with an air of the most serious interest. This question was so absurd, so impertinent, that Mr. Robert for a moment remained stupified, stunned; then, with a flush of rage mounting to his brow, he said, with a firm and cold voice, "Since you take so much interest in my health, I hope you will come to-morrow morning to know how I am?" "How, then, my dear sir—but certainly I will send," said the Duke, with hauteur. Mr. Robert made a kind of half bow, and passed on. "The best of the joke is, that he hasn't got the asthma any more than the grand Turk," said the Duke, falling back on his seat near Sarah, "unless I have guessed it without knowing. I say, Madame M'Gregor, does he look to you, this gentleman, as if he had the asthma?"

Sarah turned her back upon the duke, without answering a word. All this passed very rapidly. Sarah had with much difficulty kept from laughing. Madame d'Harville had suffered much from thinking of the feelings of a man who was questioned so ridicu-

lously before a woman he loved; she was alarmed for fear a duel might take place; then, urged on by sentiments of irresistible pity, she arose quickly, took Sarah's arm, rejoined Mr. Robert, who was beside himself with rage, and whispered as she passed him, "To-morrow, at one o'clock, I will go."

Then, regaining the gallery with the countess, she left the ball.

CHAPTER XI.

YOU COME VERY LATE, MY ANGEL.

Rodolphe, in coming to the fête as an act of complaisance, wished also to discover if his fears concerning Madame d'Harville were well founded, and if she was really the heroine of the story of Madame Pipelet. After leaving the garden with the Countess * * *, Rodolphe had sauntered in vain through several saloons, in the hope of meeting Madame d'Harville alone. He returned to the conservatory, when, as he stopped for a moment on the first step of the staircase, he was a witness of the rapid scene which passed between Madame d'Harville and Mr. Robert, after the detestable pleasantry of the Duke de Lucenay; Rodolphe witnessed an exchange of very significant glances. A secret presentiment told him that this tall, handsome young man was the commandant. Wishing to be assured, he entered the gallery. A waltz was about to commence; at the end of a few moments, he saw Mr. Robert standing in a doorway. He appeared doubly satisfied both with his answer to the duke (Mr. Robert was very brave, notwithstanding his follies) and with the rendezvous that Madame d'Harville had given him for the next day, quite certain that this time she would not fail. Rodolphe went to look for Murphy: "You see that fair young man in the midst of that group there?" "That tall man who appears so self-satisfied? "Yes, my lord."

"Endeavour to approach near enough to whisper to him without his seeing you, and so he alone can hear, these words: "*You come very late, my angel!*" The squire looked at Rodolphe with surprise. "Seriously, my lord?" "Seriously. If he turns at these words, guard that magnificent 'sang-froid' that I have so often admired, so that the gentleman cannot discover who has uttered them." "I comprehend nothing, my lord, but I obey."

The worthy Murphy, before the end of the waltz, had contrived to place himself exactly behind Mr. Robert. Rodolphe, equally well placed, so as to lose none of the effects of this experiment, followed Murphy with his eyes; at the end of a second, Mr. Robert turned suddenly round, with a most surprised look.

The impassable squire never winked, and certainly this large bald man, with his imposing and serious expression, was the last person the commandant could suspect of having pronounced these words, which recalled to him the disagreeable "*quid pro quo*" of which Madame Pipelet had been the cause and the heroine. The waltz finished, Murphy returned to Rodolphe. "Well, my lord, this young man turned as if I had bitten him. These words, then, are magical?" "They are magical, my old Murphy; they have revealed to me what I wished to know." Rodolphe could do nothing more than pity Madame d'Harville for a fault so much the more dangerous, as he had a vague presentiment that Sarah was an accomplice or confidant. At this discovery, he felt a grievous blow; he no longer doubted the cause of the sorrow of Monsieur d'Harville, whom he loved tenderly; jealousy was the reason, no doubt. His wife, endowed with charming qualities, was sacrificed to a man every way unworthy of her. Master of a secret obtained by chance, incapable of abusing it, not having it in his power to try to enlighten Madame d'Harville, Rodolphe found himself obliged to remain a quiet spectator of the ruin of this young woman. He was aroused from these sad thoughts by the Baron de Graün. "If your highness will grant me a moment's conversation in the little saloon where there is nobody, I will have the honour to give you an account of the information I have obtained."

Rodolphe followed him. "The only duchess whose name has any connexion with the initials N. and L. is the Duchess de Lucenay, born de Noirmont," said the baron; she is not here to-night. I have just seen her husband, the duke, who set out on a journey to the East about five months since, which was to last more than a year; he returned unexpectedly two or three days since." The reader will recollect that, on his visit to the house in the Rue du Temple, Rodolphe had found near the door of the apartments of the quack César Bradamanté, a handkerchief bathed in tears, richly bordered with lace, and in the corner of which he had remarked the letters N. and L. surmounted with a ducal coronet.

By his orders, but ignorant of this fact, Baron de Graën had inquired the names of the duchesses then in Paris, and obtained the information given above.

Rodolphe comprehended everything. He had no reason to interest himself about the duchess; but he could not prevent himself from shuddering in thinking that, if she really had made a visit to the quack, this scoundrel, who was no other than the Abbé Polidori, possessed the name of this woman, whom he caused Tortillard to follow, and who could frightfully abuse the terrible secret that had placed the duchess in his power.

Rodolphe, reflecting on the strange rencontres that chance had brought about, descended into the winter garden; the supper hour had arrived, the saloons were almost deserted; the most retired spot in the conservatory was in the midst of some shrubbery, at the angle of two walls, that an enormous banana, surrounded with climbing plants, almost entirely concealed: a small side door, hidden by the trellis, and leading to the refreshment-room by a long corridor, was half open, not far from this tree.

Concealed by this screen of verdure, Rodolphe seated himself in this spot. He was for some moments plunged in a profound reverie, when his name, pronounced by a well-known voice, made him shudder.

Sarah, seated on the other side of the foliage which concealed Rodolphe, was talking in English with her brother Tom. Rodolphe listened attentively to the following conversation. "The marchioness has gone for a moment to the ball of the Baron de Norval; she has, happily, gone off without being able to speak to Rodolphe, who sought her, for I dread always the influence he has over her; an influence which I have had so much trouble to combat, and partly to destroy. In short, this rival, whom I have always feared from presentiment, and who can, by-and-by, so much injure my projects—this rival will be lost to-morrow. Listen to me—this is serious, Tom." "You are mistaken, Rodolphe has never thought of the marchioness." "It is time I should give you some explanations on this subject. Many things took place during your last journey; and it is necessary that we should act sooner than I thought—even to-night, when we leave here. This conversation is indispensable. Happily, we are alone." "I listen."

"Before she saw Rodolphe, this woman, I am sure, never

loved. I do not know for what reason she evinces an unconquerable aversion to her husband, who adores her. There is a mystery there, that I have endeavoured to penetrate in vain. The presence of Rodolphe had excited in the heart of Clemence a thousand new emotions. I stifled this growing love by overwhelming revelations touching the prince. But the need of love was awakened in the bosom of the marchioness. Meeting, at my house, with this Mr. Robert, she was struck with his beauty, struck as one is at the sight of a picture; I praised the nobleness of his heart, the elevation of his character. I knew the natural goodness of Madame d'Harville; I described Mr. Robert as surrounded by the most interesting misfortunes; I recommended him to be always very sad, and sighing, and, above all, to speak but little. He has followed my counsels. Thanks to his talent for singing, to his figure, and, above all, his appearance of sorrow, he has almost made himself beloved by Madame d'Harville, who has thus given a change to this need of love which the sight of Rodolphe had alone awakened. Do you understand now?"

"Perfectly—continue." "Robert and Madame d'Harville only seeing one another intimately at my house, twice a week, we practised music, we three, in the morning. The handsome unfortunate sighed, said some tender words in a low tone; he slipped in her hands two or three billets. I feared still more his prose than his words; but a woman is always indulgent for the first declarations she receives; those of my protégé did him no harm; the most important thing was to obtain a meeting. This little marchioness had more principle than love, or, rather, she had not love enough to forget principle. Unknown to her, there existed always in the bottom of her heart, a 'souvenir' of Rodolphe, which watched, as I may say, over her, and combated the feeble 'penchant' for Mr. Robert—a 'penchant' much more seeming than real—but kept alive by her lively interest in the imaginary misfortunes of Mr. Robert, and by the incessant exaggeration of my praises of this Apollo without brains. Finally, Clemence, conquered by the profoundly desperate air of her unfortunate adorer, decided one day to give him the rendezvous so much desired." "She made you, then, her confidant?" "She avowed to me her attachment to Mr. Robert, that's all; I did not wish to know anything more; it would have annoyed me. But he,

ravished with happiness, or, rather, pride, told me of his happiness, without, however, telling me the day, or the place of rendezvous." "How did you know it?" "Karl, by my orders, went the next day and the day after, very early, to hide near his door and follow him. The second day, towards noon, our lover took, in a carriage, the road to an unknown quarter, Rue du Temple. He went into a house of a bad appearance, he remained there an hour and a half, and then went away, Karl waited a long time to see if any one came out after Mr. Robert. No one came: the marchioness had failed in her promise. I knew it the next morning from the lover, as much irritated as disappointed. I counselled him to redouble his despair. The pity of Clemence was once more touched: a new rendezvous, but all in vain, as the first. A last time, however, she came to the door: some progress. You see how this woman struggles—and why? Because I am sure it is that which causes my hatred; she has always in the bottom of her heart, and without knowing it, a love for Rodolphe, which seems thus to protect her. Finally, she has given a rendezvous for to-morrow: this time, I doubt not, she will go. The Duke de Lucenay has so grossly ridiculed this young man that the marchioness, quite upset, by the humiliation of her lover has granted from pity what, perhaps, she would not otherwise have accorded; this time, I repeat, she will keep her promise." "What are your projects?"

"This woman obeys a kind of charitable instinct, but not in love; Mr. Robert is so little made to understand the delicacy of sentiment which this night has dictated the resolution of the marchioness, that to-morrow he will wish to profit by this rendezvous, and he will ruin himself completely in the mind of Clemence, who gives herself up to this compromising step without love, without passion, and only from pity. In a word, I doubt not she goes there to do an act of courageous interest, but perfectly calm and certain not to forget for a moment her duties. This Mr. Robert never can conceive this; the marchioness will hold him in aversion; and, her illusion destroyed, she will fall under the influence of her recollections of Rodolphe, which, I am sure, lie constantly hidden at the bottom of her heart." "Well?" "Well! I wish that she should be lost to him for ever; he would have, I do not doubt, betrayed sooner or later the friendship of M. d'Harville, in responding to the love of Clemence, but he will hold her in

horror, if he knows her capable of a fault of which he has not been the object; this is an unpardonable crime for a man; in short, making a pretext of the affection which binds him to M. d'Harville, he will never see again this woman, who has unworthily deceived this friend he so much loves." "It is the husband, then, that you wish to inform?" "Yes, and to-night, if you are of my opinion. From what Clemence has told me, he has vague suspicions, without knowing on whom to fix them. It is midnight —we will leave the ball; you get out at the first hotel, and write to M. d'Harville that his wife is going to-morrow, at one o'clock, to the Rue du Temple, No. 17. He is jealous—he will surprise Clemence—you can guess the rest!" "It is an abominable action!" said the gentleman, coldly. "You are scrupulous, Tom?" "By-and-by I'll do as you wish; but I repeat to you, that it is an abominable action." "You consent, notwithstanding?" "Yes; this night M. d'Harville shall be informed of all. And—but—it seems to me that there is some one there behind the shrubbery!" said Tom, speaking in a low voice. "I thought I heard some one move." "Go and look!" said Sarah with inquietude. Tom got up, walked round, and saw no one.

Rodolphe had just disappeared through the little door of which we have spoken. "I am deceived," said Tom, on returning; "there is no one there." "That is what I thought." "Listen, Sarah. I do not think this woman as dangerous as you do for your future projects; Rodolphe has certain principles that he will never transgress. The young girl he has conducted to this farm, about six weeks since, whom he has surrounded with comforts, to whom he is giving a good education, and whom he has visited several times, inspires me with more fears. We are ignorant who she is, although she seems to belong to an obscure class of society. But the rare beauty with which she is said to be endowed, the care with which Rodolphe has conducted her to this village, the growing interest he has for her, all prove that this affection is not without importance. Thus, I have gone ahead of your wishes. To get rid of this obstacle, much more real, I think, it has been necessary to act with great caution, to be well-informed concerning the people of this farm, and of the habits of this young girl. This information I have; the moment to act is come; chance has thrown in my way this horrible old woman, who had my address. Her relations, with the kind of brigands who

attacked us the night of our excursion in the cité, will powerfully serve us. All is provided—there will be no proof against us; and, besides, if this creature, as it appears, belongs to the working class, she will not hesitate between our offers, and the fate, even brilliant that she dreamed of, for the prince has guarded a profound incognito; in fine, to-morrow this question shall be solved; if not, we shall see." "These two obstacles out of the way, Tom, then our grand project."

"It offers difficulties, but it may succeed." "Acknowledge that it will have one chance the more, if we execute it at the moment in which Rodolphe will be doubly overwhelmed by the disgrace of the conduct of Madame d'Harville, and by the disappearance of this creature, for whom he is so much interested?" "I think so. But if this last hope escapes us, then I shall be free," said Tom, looking at Sarah with a gloomy air. "You shall be free! You shall no longer renew the prayers which twice have, in spite of me, suspended my vengeance!" Then, looking at the crape which surrounded his hat, and his black gloves, Tom added, smiling in a sinister manner, "I await always—I—you well know that I have worn this mourning for sixteen years—and I will never leave it off until—" Sarah, whose features expressed involuntary fear, hastened to interrupt her brother, and said to him, with anxiety, "I tell you that you shall be free, Tom; for then this profound confidence, which, until now, has sustained me in circumstances so diverse, because it has been justified by more than human knowledge, will have totally abandoned me. But, until then, there is no danger, however slight in appearance, that I do not wish to guard against. Success often depends on the smallest causes. Obstacles, not very serious, may present themselves, as I am about arriving at the goal; I wish to have the field clear; I shall break them. My means are odious; so be it! Have I been eye-led—I?" cried Sarah, involuntarily raising her voice, "Silence! they are returning from supper," said Tom. "Since you think it useful to advise the Marquis d'Harville of the meeting to-morrow, let us go, it is late. The advanced hour of the night, at which this notice will be given him, will prove its importance." Tom and Sarah left the ball of the Ambassadress of * * *.

CHAPTER XII.

THE MEETING.

Wishing, at all hazards, to inform Madame d'Harville of the danger which she ran, Rodolphe, leaving the embassy without waiting the end of the conversation between Tom and Sarah, was ignorant of the plot hatched by them against Fleur de Marie, and the imminent peril which menaced this young girl. Notwithstanding his efforts, Rodolphe, unfortunately, was not able to save the Marchioness, as he had hoped. She, at her departure from the ball, had intended to appear for a moment at Madame de Nerval's, but, overcome by the emotions which agitated her, Madame d'Harville had not the courage to go to this second fête, and returned home. This, unfortunately, ruined all. The Baron de Graün, as well as most of the other guests of the Countess * * * was invited to Madame de Nerval's; Rodolphe drove with him there rapidly, with directions to seek out Madame d'Harville, and to inform her that the prince desired to say to her that night some words of the greatest interest; he would be on foot before the Hotel d'Harville, and that he would open the door of the carriage to speak to her, while her people were opening the gate. After losing much time in seeking her, the baron returned. She had not appeared. Rodolphe was in despair; he had wisely thought that he should, first of all, advise the Marchioness of the treason to which she would be a victim; for then the accusation of Sarah, which he could not prevent, would pass for an indignant calumny. He was too late: this infamous letter was sent to the Marquis at one hour after midnight. * *

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The next morning M. d'Harville was walking slowly in his sleeping apartment, furnished with elegant simplicity. The bed had not been used, yet the silken counterpane hung in tatters; a chair, and a little table of ebony with twisted legs, were overturned near the fire-place; on the carpet were seen the fragments of a crystal goblet, wax candles half crushed, and a candlestick with two branches thrown in the corner. This disorder seemed to have been caused by a violent struggle. M. d'Harville was about thirty years of age, a manly face of much character, an expression ordinarily agreeable and pleasant, but then contracted,

pale, and violent; he wore his dress of the previous evening; his neck was bare, his waistcoat open; his shirt, torn, appeared here and there stained with drops of blood; his brown hair, usually curled, fell rough and tangled on his livid forehead. After having walked up and down for a long time, his arms crossed, his head down, his look fixed and glaring, M. d'Harville stopped suddenly before the fireless hearth. He took from the marble chimney-piece this letter, which he read again with devouring attention, by the dull light of the winter morning. "To-morrow, at one o'clock, your wife has an engagement in the Rue du Temple, No. 17. Follow her, and you will know all—Happy husband!" As he read these words, already so many times perused, his lips, blue with cold, seemed convulsively to spell letter by letter this fatal billet. At this moment the door opened; a valet de chambre entered.

While Joseph was occupied in repairing the disorder of the room, the Marquis went straight to the armoury, examined attentively, for some minutes, the arms which composed it, made a gesture of ominous satisfaction, and said to Joseph, "I am sure that you have forgotten to clean my guns which are up there in my hunting equipage." "My lord has not spoken to me about it," said Joseph, astonished. "Yes; but you have forgotten." "I protest to my lord—" "They ought to be in good condition!" "It is scarcely a month since they were brought from the gunsmith's!" "No matter; as soon as I am dressed, hand them down to me; I shall go shooting to-morrow, perhaps; I want to examine these guns."

The room arranged, a second valet de chambre came to assist Joseph. The toilet finished, the Marquis entered into the cabinet, where Doublet (his steward) and a notary's clerk awaited him. "This is the act which we have come to read to your lordship," said the steward; "it only requires your signature." "Have you read it, Doublet?" "Yes, my lord." "In that case, it is sufficient—I sign." He signed: the clerk went out. "By means of this acquisition, my lord," said Doublet, with a triumphant manner, "your ground-rents, on good security, are not less than 126,000 francs. Do you know that this is very uncommon, a revenue of 126,000 francs, ground rent?"

"I am a very happy man, am I not, Doublet? 126,000 francs ground rent! There is no happiness at all comparable!"

"Without reckoning the portfolio—without reckoning—" "Certainly, and without reckoning—so many other sources of happiness still!" "God be praised! for you want nothing: youth, riches, and health—every happiness united; and, among them" said Doublet, smiling agreeably, "or, rather at their head, I place that of being the husband of the Marchioness, and of having a charming little girl that resembles a cherubim." M. d'Harville cast a sinister look at the intendant. We shall not attempt to paint the expression of savage irony with which he said to Doublet, striking him familiarly on the shoulder, "With 126,000 francs, ground-rent, and a wife like mine, and a child that looks like a cherubim, there is nothing left to wish for, is there?"

Scarcely had he gone, than M. d'Harville fell upon his chair, quite overcome; he leaned his arms on his desk, and concealed his face in his hands. For the first time since he had received the fatal letter, he could weep. "Oh!" said he, "cruel derision of destiny, which has made me rich! What shall I put in this golden frame now? My shame—the infamy of Clemence? Infamy that the world, perhaps, will cast back on the brow of my child! Shall I conceal it? shall I have pity—of—no, no! blood! blood! revenge will save from ridicule! I now understand her aversion. The miserable—"; Then, stopping suddenly, as if struck with a sudden thought, he continued, in a mournful tone, "Her aversion? Oh! I know well the cause; I inspire her with horror—I frighten her!" And, after a long silence, "But is it my fault? Must she deceive me on that account? Instead of hatred, is it not pity that I merit?" continued he, arousing himself by degrees. "No, no, blood! both—both! for she, without doubt, has told all this to the *other*." This thought redoubled the fury of the Marquis. He raised his two clenched fists towards Heaven; then, passing his burning hands over his eyes, and feeling the necessity of calming himself before his people, he entered into his sleeping room in apparent tranquillity. He found Joseph there. "Well, the guns?" "Here they are, my lord, they are in perfect order." "I will see. Has my wife rung yet?" "I do not know, my lord." "Go and see." M. d'Harville hastened to take from the gun-box a small powder-horn, some balls and percussion caps, then relocked the box and kept the key; after which, he went to the panoply and took a pair of *Manton* pistols, of small size, loaded them, and put them in the pocket of his

morning coat. At this moment Joseph came back. "My lord, you can see my lady." "Has Madame d'Harville ordered her carriage?" "No, my lord; Mademoiselle Juliette said, before me, to the coachman, who came to get his orders for the morning, that as it was cold and dry, madame would go out on foot—if she went out." "Very well. Ah! I forgot. If I go shooting, it will be to-morrow or after. Tell Williams to examine the little green britska this morning; you hear me?" "Yes, my lord. Will you not have your cane?" "No. Is there not a hackney-stand near?" "Very near; at the corner of the Rue du Lille."

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On leaving his room, instead of visiting Madame d'Harville, he only said to her femme de chambre: "You will tell the Marchioness that I desired to speak to her this morning, but that I am obliged to go out for a moment; if it is agreeable to her to breakfast with me, I shall return by noon; if not, never mind. Thinking that I will return, she will believe herself more free," said M. d'Harville to himself, and he walked to the hack stand near his house. "Coachman, by the hour!"

"Yes, citizen; it is half-past eleven o'clock. Where shall we go?" "Rue de Belle Chasse, at the corner of the Rue Saint Dominique, alongside of a garden-wall you will find there: you will wait."

"Yes, Sir." M. d'Harville let down the curtains. The carriage was driven off, and soon arrived opposite the house of the marquis. From this place no one could go out of the doors without being seen by him. Twelve o'clock struck at Saint Thomas d'Aquin, when the door of the Hotel d'Harville was slowly opened, and the Marchioness came out. "Already! Ah! what attention! she feared to make the *other* one wait." Clemence wore a black hat, covered with a blond veil of the same colour, and a dress of purple silk; her immense cashmere shawl of deep blue reached to the skirt of her dress, which she raised gracefully to cross the street. Thanks to this movement, one could just have a glimpse of a pretty little foot, in its beautiful boot of Turkish satin. * * * * *

The Marquis partly pulled down the blind, and said to the coachman, "You see that lady in the black hat and blue shawl, who is walking along the wall?" "Yes, Sir." "Drive slowly, and follow her. If she goes to the hack-stand, follow the car-

riage she gets into." "Yes, Sir." "Stop, stop, this is amusing!"

Madame d'Harville went to the hackney-stand and got into one of the carriages. The coachman of d'Harville followed her. At the end of a few moments, to the great astonishment of the Marquis, the coachman took the road to the church of Saint Thomas d'Aquin, and stopped there. "Citizen, the lady has just got out at the church. Sacristie! what a fine little foot; all the same—it is very amusing!" A thousand different thoughts agitated d'Harville; at first he thought that his wife, seeing that she was followed, wished to put a stop to the pursuit. Then he thought that perhaps the letter was a calumny. If Clemence was culpable, why this false appearance of piety? was it not a sacrilegious jesting? For a moment d'Harville had a ray of hope, so great was the contrast between this apparent piety and the act of which his wife was accused. This illusive consolation endured but for a short time. His coachman leaned over and whispered, "Sir, the little lady has returned to the carriage." "Follow her." The hack reached the quays, the Hotel de Ville, the Rue Saint Avoye, and finally, the Rue du Temple.

"Sir," said the coachman, "they have stopped at No. 17; we are at No. 13; shall we stop also?" "Yes." "The little lady has gone into No. 17." "Open the door." "Yes, Sir." Some seconds after, d'Harville entered close on the steps of his wife.

CHAPTER XIII.

AN ANGEL.

Madame d'Harville entered the house. Attracted by curiosity, Madame Pipelet, Alfred, and the oyster-woman were standing in the door of the lodge. The staircase was so dark that, on coming in from the light, it could not be seen. The Marchioness, obliged to address herself to Madame Pipelet, said to her in a voice trembling with emotion, "Mr. Charles, madame!" "Mr. who?" repeated the old woman, feigning not to hear her, so as to allow her husband and the oyster-woman time to examine her features through her veil. "I ask for—Mr. Charles—madame," answered Clemence, holding down her head, in endeavouring to conceal her face from the looks of those who examined her with such insolent curiosity.

"Ah! Mr. Charles! very good; you speak so low that I didn't hear. Well, my little lady, since you wish to see Mr. Charles, a fine young man, just so—go up straight ahead; it is the door opposite." The Marchioness, overwhelmed with confusion, put her foot on the first step. "Eh! eh! eh!" added the old woman, chuckling; "it appears that it is all right to-day." "That doesn't prevent him from being an amateur, the commandant," added the oyster-woman. If it had not been necessary to repass the lodge, where these creatures were stationed, Madame d'Harville, almost expiring with fright and shame, would have left immediately. She made a last effort and reached the landing-place. What was her surprise! She found herself face to face with Rodolphe, who, placing a purse in her hands, said quickly, "Your husband knows all; he follows you." At this moment the sharp voice of Madame Pipelet was heard, crying,

"Where are you going to, Sir?" "It is he!" said Rodolphe; and he added rapidly, pushing her towards the staircase leading to the second story, "Go up to the garret: you have just come to succour an unfortunate family, they are called Morel." "Sir, you shall pass over my body rather than go up without saying where you are going to!" cried Madame Pipelet, barring the passage to the Marquis.

"I follow the lady who has just entered," said the marquis.

"That is different; pass on." Having heard an unusual noise, the commandant half opened his door. Rodolphe entered quickly, and shut himself in with him at the moment Madame d'Harville reached the landing-place. Fearing that he might be recognized by the Marquis, he profited by this occasion securely to escape.

Mr. Charles Robert, magnificently dressed in his flowery robe-de-chambre and his Greek cap of embroidered velvet, remained stupified at the sight of Rodolphe, whom he had not perceived at the ball, and who was more modestly dressed than ever. "Sir, what is the meaning—" "Silence!" said Rodolphe in a low voice, but with such an expression of anguish that Mr. Robert was silent. A violent noise, like that of a body which fell and rolled down the stairs, resounded through the staircase. "The unfortunate being has killed her?" cried Rodolphe. "Killed! who? But what is all this? said Mr. Robert, in a low voice, and turning pale. Without answering him, Rodolphe opened the door. He saw descending in great haste, and limping, the little Tortil-

lard; he held in his hand the purse of red silk that Rodolphe had just given to Madame d'Harville. The light footstep of Madame d'Harville could be heard, as well as the heavier one of her husband, who continued to follow her to the upper story. Not comprehending how Tortillard could have this purse in his possession, but a little reassured, Rodolphe said to Mr. Robert, "Do not stir from hence; you have been near ruining everything." "But sir," answered Mr. Robert, in an impatient manner, "will you tell me what this signifies? Who are you, and by what right—" "This signifies, sir, that the husband of Madame d'Harville knows everything; that he has followed his wife to your door, and that he follows her up there." Ah! my God! my God!" cried Mr. Robert, joining his hands in terror; "but what will she do up there?" "Never mind; remain in your room and do not come out until the porteress advises you." Leaving Mr. Robert as much frightened as stupified "Rodolphe descended to the lodge. "Well! say now?" cried Madame Pipelet, with a radiant air; "it grows warm! there is a gentleman who has followed the little lady. It is without doubt the husband, the dandelion. I guessed that right away, and I sent him up. He will massacre the commandant; that will make a noise in the neighbourhood; people will crowd to see the house, the same as they did to see No. 36, where there was an assassination." "My dear Madame Pipelet, will you render me a great service?" and Rodolphe put five louis in the hands of the porteress. "When this lady comes down, ask her how she found these poor Morels; tell her she does a good act in helping them, as she had promised to come and get some information concerning them."

Madame Pipelet looked at the money, and then at Rodolphe, in amazement! "How! sir, this gold—is for me? And this little lady—she is not then, at the commandant's?" "The gentleman who followered her is the husband. Advised in time, the poor woman went up to the Morel's, as if she came to bring them alms; do you comprehend?" "If I comprehend, I must aid in deceiving the husband: that suits me—like a glove! You shall say I do this as if I had done nothing else all my life. I say!"

Here could have been seen the broad-brimmed hat of Monsieur Pipelet, raising itself suddenly in the shade of the lodge. "Anastasia," said Alfred, gravely, "I see you have respect for nothing on this earth; just like César Bradamanté—there are some things

which should never be agitated even in the charms of imtimacy." "Come, come, my man, don't play the prude with your eyes like loto balls; you see I am only joking. Do you not know that there is not a person in the world who can boast of—enough—sufficient. If I am obliging, it is only to oblige our new lodger, who is so good." Turning to Rodolphe, she said, "you shall see me work! Will you remain in the corner there, behind the curtain? Hold, I have them now."

Rodolphe hastened to conceal himself. M. and Madame d'Harville descended, she holding on his arm. When they arrived opposite the lodge, the face of d'Harville expressed profound happiness, mingled with astonishment and confusion. Clemence was calm and pale. "Well! my good lady, cried Madame Pipelet, coming out of the lodge, "have you seen these poor Morels? I hope that touches your heart! Ah! my God, it is a good work you are doing there. I told you they were much to be pitied the last time you came for information. Be easy, you can never do enough for such good people—is it not so, Alfred?" Alfred, whose prudery and natural integrity revolted at the idea of entering into this anti-conjugal complot, answered vaguely, by a kind of negative growl. Madame Pipelet continued: "Alfred has the cramp in the stomach, otherwise he would tell you, as I do, that these poor people will pray to God for you, my worthy lady! "M. d'Harville looked at his wife with admiration, and repeated, "An angel! an angel! Oh! calumny!" "An angel? you are right, sir, and a good angel, what's more!" "My friend, let us go," said Madame d'Harville, who suffered horribly from the constraint she had imposed on herself since her entrance into the house; she felt her strength giving way. "Let us go," said the marquis. He added, at the moment of leaving the alley, "Clemence, I need pardon and pity." Who has not need?" said she with a sigh.

Rodolphe came out of his retreat, profoundly affected at this scene of terror, mingled with ridicule and vulgarity; a singular denouement of a mysterious drama, which had raised so many diverse passions.

"Well!" said Madame Pipelet, "I hope I did him nicely—the dandelion? And your furniture, Mr. Rodolphe, they have not brought it yet?" "I am going to attend to it. You can go and tell the commandant, now, he can come down." "True. I say now ain't it a farce! It appears as if he might have hired the room for

the King of Prussia. It is well done—with his shabby twelve francs a month!" Rodolphe went out. "I say, Alfred!" said Madame Pipelet," the commandant's turn now! I am going to have a good laugh!" She ascended to the room of Mr. Robert; rang at the door, which he opened. "Commandant!" and Anastasia carried the back of her hand in military style to the back of her periwig, "I come to let you out of prison. They are gone arm in arm, the husband and wife, right under your nose! All the same, you escaped a fine—thanks to Mr. Rodolphe; you ought to be very grateful." "Is it the slender gentleman with moustaches who is Mr. Rodolphe?" "Himself." "Who is this man?" "This man?" cried Madame Pipelet, in a vexed manner: "he is worth any other! two others! He is a travelling clerk, resident of this house, who has but one room, and who is not mean—not he! He has given me six francs for his board; six francs! and right off! Once more I say, six francs, without bargaining." "Very well—very well; here is the key." "Shall I make a fire to-morrow, commandant?" "No." "After to-morrow?" "No, no." "Well, commandant, do you remember? I told you that you would not pay your expenses." Mr. Robert cast a look of contempt on the porteress, and went out, not being able to comprehend how a travelling clerk could have been informed of his rendezvous with the Marchioness d'Harville. At the moment he went out of the alley he met the little Tortillard who, came in hobbling. "Here you are, you wicked dog," said Madame Pipelet. "Has the Borgnesse been here for me?" asked the child, of the porteress, without replying to her. "La Chouette? No; horrid monster! Why should she come to seek for you?" "Stop! to take me to the country, then!" said Tortillard, swinging on the door of the lodge. "And your master?" "My father asked Mr. Bradamanté to give me a holyday—to go to the country—the country!" sang out the son of Bras-Rouge, drumming on the window of the lodge.

"Will you stop brat? You will break my glasses? But here is a hack."

"Oh! good, it is La Chouette," said the child; "what happiness to go in a carriage!" In effect, through the glass and on the red curtain inside could be seen the earthly profile of the Borgnesse. She made a sign to Tortillard who ran and jumped into the vehicle. La Chouette was not alone. In another corner of the carriage, wrapped up in an old cloak with a fur collar, his

features half concealed by a black silk nightcap which came down to his eyebrows, might have been seen the Brigand. His red eyelids left visible two white immovable eyes, without pupils, and which rendered still more frightful his scarred visage, which was marbled by the cold with blue and livid seams. "Come child, squat down on the legs of my man; you will keep him warm," said La Borgnesse to Tortillard, who crept like a dog between the legs of the Brigand and La Chouette. "Now," said the coachman "to the Bouqueval farm, is it not, La Chouette? You shall see that I know how to drive a carriage." "Above all, whip your horse," said the Brigand. "Be easy, No-eyes—he will run all the way to the cross-road." "Shall I give you some advice?" said the Brigand. "What?" answered the coachman. "Drive fast through the barriers, otherwise they may recognize you." "I will keep my eyes open," said the other, mounting his seat. The carriage left the Rue du Temple. Two hours after, at the close of day, this vehicle stopped before a wooden cross, marking a deserted and stony road which led to the Bouqueval farm, where the Goualeuse resided, under the protection of Madame Georges.

THE MYSTERIES OF PARIS.

PART III.

CHAPTER I.

AN ECLOGUE.

Five o'clock struck at the church of the little village of Bouqueval; the cold was sharp, the sky serene; the sun, sinking slowly behind the tall, leafless trees which crowned the heights of Ecouen shed a purple tint over the horizon, and cast his pale and oblique rays over the vast field, hardened by frost.

Concealed during the summer in the midst of trees like a nest in some foliage, the farm where the Goualeuse had retired, appeared quite entire without its veil of verdure. The course of the little river frozen by the cold resembled a long riband of unwrought silver, unrolled in the midst of meadows always green, where some fine cows grazed in slowly regaining their stables. Brought back by the approach of night, flights of pigeons settled down successively on the sharp roof of the pigeon house; the immense walnut-trees, which during the summer shaded the court and the farm-buildings, then despoiled of their leaves, permitted the tiled and thatched roofs to be seen, covered with velvet-like moss of emerald green.

A heavy cart, drawn by three stout horses, thick-set, with heavy manes, shining coats, harnessed with blue collars, trimmed with small bells and tufts of red wool, was bringing a load of wheat from one of the mills of the plain. This heavy vehicle arrived in the court through the large gate, while a large flock of sheep crowded through one of the side enterances. Man and beast seemed impatient to escape from the coldness of the night, and to taste the delights of repose. The horses neighed joyously at the sight of the stables; the sheep bleated in besieging the door of the warm sheepfolds; the workmen cast an impatient glance through the windows of the kitchen, where was preparing the evening meal. There existed in this farm rare and extreme order—a

neatness minute and unusual. Instead of being covered with dry mud, scattered here and there, and exposed to the inclemency of the season, the harrows, ploughs, rollers, and other implements of husbandry, of which some were of an entirely new invention, were arranged neatly under a large shed, where the waggoners came and placed the harness of their horses. The lower court, surrounded by a green trellis, received all the feathered tribe, and these came in every night by a small door opening on the fields. In every thing this farm passed throughout the country for a model-farm, as much from the order that was established there, as by the excellence of its agriculture and crops, and by the happiness and morality of the numerous persons who made the place of value.

In the mean while, we will conduct the reader to the trellis door of the lower court, which yielded in nothing to the rest of the farm, by the neatness of its roosts, coops, and its little canal encased with small stones, where flowed constantly, pure and limpid water, just then carefully cleared from the ice which might obstruct it.

A kind of revolution suddenly seemed to break out among the inhabitants of this lower court. The hens left their perches cackling; the turkeys gobbled; the Guinea fowls screamed; the pigeons abandoned the roof of the pigeon-house, and lit on the sand, cooing.

The arrival of Fleur de Marie was the cause of all these gay follies. Watteau never could have imagined a more charming model, if the cheeks of the poor Goualeuse had been rosier and fuller. Yet, notwithstanding her paleness, and the thinness of her oval-shaped face, the expression of her features, the ensemble of her person, the grace of her attitude, would have been worthy of the pencil of the great painter.

The little round hat of Fleur de Marie displayed her fine forehead, with its bands of flaxen hair. Like almost all the peasant girls of the environs of Paris, under this hat she wore, arranged very smoothly, and fastened behind her head with two large pins, a red Indian handkerchief, whose square ends fell gracefully on her shoulders, a picturesque and graceful head-dress, which even Italy and Switzerland might envy us.

A kerchief of white lawn, crossed on her bosom, was half concealed by her apron of brown linen; a dress of blue cloth,

with tight sleeves, set off her fine figure, under which was seen her petticoat of thick grey fustian, striped with brown; very white stockings, and black buskins, hidden in the little black sabots (wooden shoes), trimmed on the instep with a piece of lambskin, completed this costume of rustic simplicity, to which the natural charms of Fleur de Marie gave additional ornament. Holding in one hand her apron by the two corners, she took from thence handfuls of grain, which she distributed to the winged crowd by which she was surrounded. A pretty pigeon, of silvery whiteness, with beak and feet of purple, more audacious or more familiar than the rest, after having fluttered for some time around Fleur de Marie, settled at last on her shoulder. The young girl, accustomed doubtless, to this cavalier treatment, did not discontinue throwing the grain with a liberal hand; but half turning her sweet face, with its enchanting profile, she slightly raised her head, and smilingly extended her rosy lips to the coral beak of her friend.

The last rays of the setting sun shed a golden beam on this charming picture.

CHAPTER II.

UNEASINESS.

While Marie was busy with her rural occupations, Madame Georges and the abbé Laporte, curé of Bouqueval, were seated at the side of the fire, in the little saloon of the farm. The old curate, pensive, thoughtful, his head down, and his elbows on his knees, extended mechanically before the fire his two trembling hands. Madame Georges, occupied with her sewing, looked at the abbé from time to time, and appeared to be waiting for an answer. After a moment's silence, he said, "You are right, Madame Georges, we must inform Mr. Rodolphe; if he questions Marie, she is so grateful to him, that perhaps she will avow to her benefactor what she conceals from us."

"Poor child!" continued the abbé; "she ought to be so happy; what sorrow can be preying upon her now?" "Nothing seems to drive away this sadness, not even her application to her books." "She really has made extraordinary progress for the little time she has been studying."

"Is it not so? To learn to read and write almost at once, and

to know enough of accounts to assist me in keeping the books of the farm; and, besides, the dear soul aids me so actively in everything, that I am at once touched and astonished. She fatigues herself so much, in spite of me, that I am uneasy about her health." "Happily, this black doctor has quite reassured us as to this slight cough which so much alarmed us." "He is so good; he is so much interested for her. My God! like every one else who knows her. Here, each cherishes and respects her. This is not surprising, for, thanks to the generous and elevated views of Mr. Rodolphe, the people of this farm are the best in the country. But the most boorish, the most indifferent, cannot be insensible to the attractions of this gentleness, at once angelic and timid, which always seems to be asking pardon. Unhappy child! as if she alone was culpable!" "Have you not told me," said the abbé, "that the sadness of Marie is dated from the time of the visit of Madame Dubreuil, the fermière of the Duke of Lucenay, at Arnouville, made here, at the fête of All Saints?" "Yes; I have remarked it; yet Madame Dubreuil, and, above all, her daughter Clara, a model of candour and goodness, have felt, like every one else, the charms of Marie; both of them overwhelmed her daily with marks of friendship; you know, on Sunday, our friends of Arnouville come here, or we go to see them. Well; one would say that each visit augments the melancholy of our dear child, although Clara already loves her like a sister."

"Truly, Madame Georges, it is a strange mystery. What can be the cause of this secret grief! She ought to be so happy! Between her present situation and the past, there is the difference of hell to paradise. Yet we cannot accuse her of ingratitude."

"Her! great God!—she—so sweetly grateful for our attentions! she in whom we have always found instincts of rare delicacy. This poor little thing, does she not do all she can that she may earn her living? does she not endeavour, by her services, to compensate for the hospitality she enjoys? This is not all; except Sundays, when I require her to dress with some little care to accompany me to church, she has always wished to wear clothes as coarse and humble as those of the girls of the country. And, notwithstanding this, there exists in her such a distinction, such natural grace, that she is only still more charming in this dress: is it not so?"

"Ah! how I recognise, there, maternal pride!" said the old priest, smiling. At these words the eyes of Madame Georges filled with tears; she thought of her son. The abbé, guessing the cause of her emotion, said, "Courage! God has sent you this poor child to aid you in waiting for the time when you shall find your son. And, besides, a holy tie will attach you soon to Marie; a godmother, when she comprehends her holy duties, is almost a mother. As to Mr. Rodolphe, he has given her, so to speak, the life of the soul, in dragging her from the abyss. In advance he has fulfilled his duties of godfather."

"Do you find her sufficiently instructed to administer that sacrament which the unfortunate has doubtless not yet received?"

"In returning with her, directly, to the presbytery, I shall inform her that this ceremony will probably take place in a fortnight."

"Perhaps, sir, you will preside, some day, at another ceremony, also very pleasing and serious." "What do you mean to say?"

"If Marie was beloved as she deserved—if she loved a good and honest man—why should she not be married?"

The abbé sadly bent his head, and answered:

"Marry her? Reflect, Madame Georges; truth will compel us to tell all to him who would wish to espouse Marie. And what man, notwithstanding my caution, and yours, would brave the past, which has sullied the youthful days of this unfortunate child? Nobody would have her." "But Mr. Rodolphe is so generous! he will do for his protégée still more than he has done —a dowry."

"Alas!" said the abbé, interrupting Madame Georges, "evil to Marie, if cupidity alone will silence the scruples of him who would marry her. She would be wedded to the most painful fate; cruel recriminations would soon follow such an union." "You are right, abbé, it would be horrible. Ah! what an unfortunate fate is then reserved for her!" "She has great faults to expiate," said the abbé, gravely. "My God! abandoned so young, without resources, without aid, almost without the idea of good and evil, dragged, in spite of herself, in the ways of evil, how could she have escaped?" "Moral good sense ought to have sustained her, enlightened her; and, besides, did she endeavour to escape this horrid fate? Charitable people, are then so scarce in Paris?" "No, doubtless; but how to find them? Before discovering one,

how many refusals, how much indifference and, besides, Marie did not need a passing charity, but a continued interest, which had put her in the way to earn her living." "Many mothers, without doubt, would have had pity on her; but it needed the good fortune to find them. Ah! believe me, I have known misery. But for a providential escape like that which, alas! too late, brought Mr. Rodolphe to Marie; the unfortunate, almost always brutally repulsed in first demands, believes pity not to be found, and pressed by hunger—hunger so imperious, they often seek resources in vice, which they despair to obtain from commiseration."

At this moment Marie entered the room.

"Where do you come from, my child?" asked Madame Georges, with an air of interest. "From the fruitery, madame, after having closed the doors of the inner court. The fruit is well preserved, except a few that I have taken out." "Why did you not tell Claudine to do it Marie? You were too much fatigued." "No, no, madame, I enjoy myself much in my fruitery, the odour of the ripe fruit is so delicious!"

"You, must some day, visit the fruitery of Marie," said Madame Georges. "You cannot imagine with how much taste it is arranged: garlands of grapes separate each kind of fruit, and these are again divided into compartments by borders of moss."

"Oh! I am sure you will be very much pleased," said Marie, ingenuously. "You will see what a fine effect the moss has around the red apples, and golden pears. There are, above all, some lady apples which are so nice, which have such a charming white and rose colour, that they look like cherubim in a nest of green moss," added the young girl, with the exultation of an artist for her work.

The curé looked at Madame Georges smilingly, and said to Fleur de Marie, "I have already admired the dairy which you direct, my child; it would be the envy of the most fastidious dairy-woman; one of these days I will go and admire your fruitery, and these red apples, and these golden pears, and, above all, these beautiful little apples—cherubim in their mossy nest. But here is the sun almost down; you will only have time to conduct me to the parsonage and return before night. Take your cloak and let us go, my child. But I think the cold is too sharp; some one from the farm will accompany me.

"Ah! Sir, you will render her very unhappy," said Madame Georges. "She is so content to accompany you thus every even-

ing!" "Sir," added Marie, raising her large blue eyes towards the priest, "I shall think you are not pleased with me if you do not allow me to accompany you as usual." "I, poor child? take your cloak, then quick, and wrap yourself up well." Fleur de Marie hastened to throw over her shoulders a sort of pelisse with a hood, made of coarse white woollen, bordered with a black velvet riband, and offered her arm to the abbé. "Happily," said he, "it is not far, and the road is safe." "As it is a little later to day than usual, replied Madame Georges, "do you wish that some one from the farm should go with you, Marie?" "They will think me a coward," said Marie, smiling. "Thank you, madame, do not trouble any one for me: the distance is short to the parsonage; only a quarter of an hour; I shall be back before night." "I shall not insist, for never, God be praised! do we hear of any vagrants in this neighbourhood." "Except on this account, I would not accept the arm of this dear child," said the abbé, "although it is of great assistance." The abbé soon left the farm, leaning on the arm of Fleur de Marie, who regulated her light step by the slow and painful movement of the old man.

A few minutes afterward, the priest and Marie arrived near the hollow pathway, where the Brigand, La Chouette, and Tortillard were lying concealed.

CHAPTER III.

THE AMBUSH.

The church and parsonage of Bouqueval, was situated on a hill-side, surrounded by chesnut trees, and overlooking the village.

Fleur de Marie and the abbé reached a crooked path, which conducted to the curé's abode, in crossing the hollow road, by which this hill was diagonally intersected.

La Chouette and Tortillard, concealed in one of the windings of this road, saw the priest and his companion descend into the ravine, and come out by a steep path. The features of the young girl were concealed under the hood of her mantle: the Borgnesse did not recognize her former victim.

"Silence, my man!" said the old woman to the Brigand; the young girl and the priest have just crossed the road; it must be her from the description given by the tall man in black: peasant's dress, middling size, petticoat striped with brown, mantle

of wool, bound with black. She thus conducts, every day, the priest to his house, and returns alone. When she returns, directly at the end of the road, we must pounce upon her and take her to the carriage." "And if she cries for help!" answered the Brigand, "they will hear her at the farm, since you say that you can see the buildings from hence; for you can see—you—," added he in a mournful tone. "Certain, we can see the houses from here," said Tortillard. "Just now, I creeped up to the top of the slope on my belly. I heard a man speaking to his horses, in the court down there." "Then, now, see what must be done," answered the Brigand, after a moment's pause: "Tortillard must go and watch at the entrance of the road. When he sees the little one coming in the distance, he must go to her crying that he is the son of a poor old woman who is wounded by falling into the the hollow-road, and he must beg the young girl to come to her assistance."

"I understand, Fourline. The poor old woman shall be your Chouette. Well managed. My man, you are always the king of sensible men! And afterward, what shall I do?"

"You will go to the end of the hollow-road, near where Barbillon waits with the carriage. I shall hide near by. When Tortillard has brought the little one to the middle of the ravine, stop groaning, and jump on her, one hand round her neck, and the other in her mouth on her tongue, understand? eh? keep her from crying."

"Understood, Fourline; just like the woman at the canal St. Martin, whom we drowned, after having robbed her of her black box, which she carried under her arm; same game, is it not?"

"Yes, just so. While you hold the little one tight, Tortillard will come after me; we three, we'll pack the young girl in my cloak; then, we'll carry her to the carriage of Barbillon, and then to the plain of St. Denis, where the man in black waits for us." "Ah! that's it! Stop, now, Fourline, your match is not to be found. If I only had some powder I would set off some fire-works on your sconce, and I would illuminate you with coloured lamps, 'a la St. Charlot.' Do you understand this, you villain? If you wish to become an adroit criminal, imitate my old dotard: there's a man for you!" said La Chouette, proudly. Then, adressing the Brigand, she said, "Apropos, you don't know Barbillon is afraid as the devil of having *a brain fever* (a capital accusation)." "How's

that?" "He killed some time since, in a dispute, the husband of a milk-woman, who came every morning from the country in a little waggon drawn by an ass, to sell milk in the cité, at the corner of the Rue de la Vieille Draperie, near to the Ogresse of the Lapin Blanc." The son of Bras-Rouge listened to La Chouette with a kind of disappointed curiosity. "You'd like to know what we are talking about, hey?" "Marry, that's certain."

If you are a good boy, I'll teach you Argot. You are old enough; it may be of use to you. Will you be pleased, 'Fife?'"

"Oh! I guess so! and, besides, I'd rather stay with you, than with the old cheat of a quack, to pound his drugs and curry his horse. If I knew where he kept his *ratsbane*, I'd put some in his soup, so I would no longer be forced to stay with him."

La Chouette burst out a laughing, and said to Tortillard, drawing him towards her, "Come right away, and kiss mamma, for you are a droll one! But how do you know that he has ratsbane?" "Hold! I heard him say it one day, when I was concealed in the black cabinet in his room, where he keeps his bottles, his steel instruments, and where he mixes in his little mortars." "You heard him say what?" asked La Chouette. "I heard him say to a gentleman, in giving him a powder in a paper, 'Whoever takes this three times, will go to sleep under ground without any one knowing why or how, and with out leaving any trace.'"

"And who was this gentleman?" asked the Brigand.

"A fine young man, who had black moustaches, and a handsome face like a lady. He came another time; but that time, when he went away, I followed him by order of M. Bradamanté, to know where he roosted. This gentleman went into a fine house in the Rue de Chaillot. My master told me: 'No matter where this gentleman goes, follow him and wait at the door; if he comes out again, follow until he stops again: if he remains, that proves he lives there: then, Tortillard, my boy, twist yourself up to know his name, or I'll twist your ears in a droll manner." "Well?" "Well! I twisted myself, and I found out his name." "How did you manage?" asked the Brigand.

"Stop. I am no fool. I entered into the porter's lodge of the house in the Rue de Chaillot: there was the porter, all powdered, in a fine brown suit, with a yellow collar and silver binding. I said to him, "My good sir, I come to get five francs that your master has promised me for finding his little black dog Trumpet;

and to prove what I say is true, this gentleman is of a dark complexion, with black moustaches, a white overcoat, and blue pantaloons; he told me that he lived in the Rue de Chaillot, and that his name was Dupont." The gentleman of whom you speak is my master, and is the Viscount Saint-Remy; there is no other dog here than yourself, you bad boy; so march, or I'll thrash you, to teach you how to try to cheat me out of five francs, answered the porter, adding a kick by way of warning. However, its all the same," continued Tortillard, philosophically. "I found out the name of the handsome gentleman with black moustaches, who came to my master's to get ratsbane."

"Do you want me to eat you, little joker?" said La Chouette, embracing Tortillard; "isn't he cunning; I declare, you deserve that I should be your mother, wicked one!" These words made a singular impression on the lame boy; his wicked countenance, crafty and cunning, became suddenly sad; he appeared to take in earnest the maternal demonstrations of La Chouette, and answered, "And I love you, too, because you embraced me the first day that you came to seek me at the Bleeding heart, at my father's. Since the death of my mother, no one but you has caressed me; everybody else beats me or drives me off like a mangy dog; everybody, down to mother Pipelet, the porteress." "Old hussey: I'll advise her," said La Chouette, "how to repulse a child's love like yours! The son of Bras-Rouge, profoundly touched with this new proof of affection, cried in his gratitude, "You have only to command; you'll see how well I'll obey you—how I'll serve you."

"Truly?' Well; you will not repent it." "Oh! I should like to live with you!" "If you are a good boy, we'll see about it; you shall never leave us, my man."

"Yes," said the Brigand, "you shall lead me like a poor blind man; you'll say you are my son, we will get into houses; and—thousand massacres!" added the murderer with rage, "La Chouette aiding, we'll do some good business! I will show this demon of a Rodolphe, who made me blind, that I am not yet at the end of my crimes! He has taken away my sight, but he has not taken the thought of evil: I will be the head, Tortillard the eyes, and you the hand, La Chouette; you'll help me, hieu?" "Am I not yours even to the rope and the gallows, Fourline? Did I not, on coming out of the hospital, when I heard that you had sent to the Ogresse's after me by that simple fellow of St. Mandé, did I not

fly to your village, among those ninnies of peasants, saying I was your wife?"

These words of the Borgnesse awoke some disagreeable souvenir, for the Brigand changing roughly his tone and language, cried in an angry voice, "Yes, I was tired, all alone with these honest people; at the end of a month, I could not remain quiet. I was afraid. Then I thought I would send for you. Well, I was caught added he in a still more irritated manner, "the day after your arrival, I was robbed of the rest of my money, that this demon of the Allée des Veuves had given me. Yes, some one stole my belt filled with gold while I was asleep. You alone could have done it; and now I am at your mercy. Hold, every time I think of this, I don't know why I don't kill you on the spot, old she-thief!" and he made a step towards the Borgnesse.

"Take care of yourself; if you hurt La Chouette!" cried Tortillard. "I'll crush you both, you and she, wicked serpents as you are!" cried the Brigand in a fury; and hearing the son of Bras-Rouge talking near him, he dealt a chance blow so vigorously that it must have killed him if it had reached him. Tortillard, as much to revenge himself as La Chouette, picked up a stone, and throwing it at the Brigand, hit him on the forehead. The blow was not dangerous, though severe. The Brigand roused himself furiously like a mad bull, made some steps forward, and stumbled.

"Break-neck!" cried La Chouette, with shouts of laughter. Notwithstanding the bloody ties which bound her to this monster, she saw, for many reasons, and with a kind of ferocious joy the annihilation of this man, formerly so renowned and so proud of his gigantic strength. The horrible child, with yellow hair and weasel face, joined in the hilarity of La Chouette. At every new false step of the Brigand, he cried, "Open your eyes, then! you are going the wrong way, don't you see clear? wipe the glasses of your spectacles."

From the impossibility of reaching the child, the Herculean murderer stopped, struck the ground with rage, placed his two enormous hands on his eyes, and put forth a cry like a muzzled tiger.

"You cough, old boy!" said the son of Bras-Rouge. "Hold, here is some famous liquorice; a gend'arme gave it to me—mustn't be disgusted with it!" and he gathered up a handful of fine sand, which he threw in the face of the assassin. Stung se-

verely by this rain of gravel, the Brigand suffered more cruelly from this new insult than from the blow of the stone; becoming pale under his livid scars, he stretched out his arms, crossed, and with a movement of inexpressible despair, and lifting towards heaven his frightful face, cried with a voice profoundly supplicating, "My God! my God!"

Coming from a man stained with every crime, and before whom formerly, the most hardened wretches had trembled, this involuntary appeal to the Divine commiseration seemed something providential. "Ah! Fourline, who makes such good use of his arms," cried La Chouette, chuckling. "Your tongue is twisted my man; it is the devil that you ought to call to your assistance." "But a knife, at least, that I may kill myself! a knife! since every one abandons me," cried the wretch, biting his fists with savage fury. "A knife? You have one in your pocket, Fourline, with a sharp edge. The little old man, of the Rue de Roule, and the cattle merchant must have told it before this to the worms." The Brigand, thus put in the way of executing his threats, changed the conversation, and continued, in a low and cowardly tone, "The Chourineur was good, he—he never robbed me; he had pity on me." "Why did you say that I stole your gold?" said La Chouette, hardly restraining her laughter.

"You alone entered into my room," answered the Brigand; "I was robbed the first night of your arrival. Who would you that I should suspect? These peasants were incapable of doing it."

"Why can't they steal as well as any one else? Is it because they drink milk and get herbs for their rabbits?" "No matter; I have b d." "Is it the fault of La Chouette? Ah, now, come, t . If I had stolen your belt, would I have remain erward?" Are you a fool? Most certainly, I w your money if I could, but, on the faith of Cho d have seen me after I had spent the money, be me just as ever with your white eyes. B good break your teeth by grind- " " ink he was cracking nuts," "Ah he droll. Come, be calm, let him a child! But acknowledge just. man in black, who looks like said a thousand francs for you, if

you will carry off a young girl, who is at the farm of Bouqueval, and bring her to a certain place on the plain of Saint Denis, that I will point out,' answer, Fourline, did I not propose this to you, instead of choosing some one who could see? It is just the same as an alms to you; for, excepting that you can hold the little one while Tortillard and I pack her up, you are no more use than a fifth wheel to an omnibus. But, no matter; setting aside that I would have robbed you if I could, I like to do you a service. I wish that you should owe everything to your dear Chouette; it is my way. We'll give two hundred francs to Barbillon for driving the carriage, and for coming here to reconnoitre; and there'll remain eight hundred francs for us two to frolic. What do you say to that? Well, are you still angry with your old woman?"

"Who can assure me that you will give me anything when the job is once done?" said the Brigand, with an air of defiance.

"I can give you nothing at all, it is true; for you are in my frying-pan, my man, like the Goualeuse, formerly. You must let yourself be cooked according to my notion, while the devil is waiting his turn to bake you! Well, Fourline, do you still pout at your Chouette?" added she, striking the shoulder of the Brigand, who remained silent and overwhelmed.

"You are right," said he, with a sigh of concentrated rage; "it is my fate—mine—mine—at the mercy of a child and a woman, whom formerly I could have killed with a breath. Oh! if I were not so much afraid of death!" said he, throwing himself on the ground. "Are you a coward?" said La Chouette, with contempt. "Do talk now of your conscience; it will still be more of a farce, Look here, if you have no more courage than this, I'll be off—I'll leave you."

"And I can never revenge myself on this man, who, in torturing me thus, has placed me in this frightful position, and from whence I can never escape!" cried the Brigand, with renewed rage. "Oh! I am afraid to die. Yes, afraid; but let any one tell me, 'They are going to place in your arms this man, and then afterward they will throw you into an abyss, both of you,' I would say, 'Let them do it.' Yes, for I would be very certain to hold him tight until we came to the bottom: and while we were rolling down, I'd bite him in the face, in the throat, in the heart; I'd tear him with my teeth! in short, I'd be jealous of a knife!"

"That's right, Fourline; that's the way I love you. Be calm:

we'll find him, this devil of a Rodolphe; and the Chourineur also. When I came out of the hospital, I hovered around the house in the Allée des Veuves—all was closed; but I said to the tall man in mourning, 'Formerly, you wanted to pay us to do something to this monster of a Rodolphe; after this affair is over with the young girl, you have only to tell us what we must do.' 'Perhaps he answered. Do you hear Fourline? perhaps! Courage, my man! we'll have a bite at him, I tell you so. We'll eat him!"

"Truly, you will not abandon me?" said the Brigand. "If you forsake me what will become of me?" "That's true. Say, now, Fourline, what a joke it would be if we—Tortillard and I—should go off in the carriage, and leave you here in the midst of fields this night, when the cold pinches so hard. That would be funny, hieu, Brigand!"

At this threat the Brigand shuddered. He drew near to La Chouette, and said to her, tremblingly. "No, no; you would not do that; nor you, Tortillard; it would be too wicked." "Too wicked! Is he a fool! And the little old man of the Rue du Roule —and the cattle merchant—and the woman of the canal Saint Martin—and the gentleman of the Allée des Veuves! Do you think that they found you very loving, with your long knife? Why shouldn't you have jokes played you in your turn?" "Well, I avow it!" said he gloomily. "Come, I was wrong to suspect you—I was wrong to wish to strike Tortillard. I ask pardon. Do you hear? and you also, Tortillard? Yes, I ask both your pardons."

"I want you to ask pardon on your knees, because you wished to strike La Chouette," said Tortillard. "Little love! ain't he amusing?" said La Chouette, laughing. "He really gives me a desire to see what sort of a figure you'll cut in that way, my man. Come, on your knees, just as if you were making love to your Chouette—quick, or we leave you; and I give you notice, in a half hour it will be night." "Night or day, what does it signify to him?" said Tortillard chuckling. "This gentleman always keeps his shutters closed; he is afraid of spoiling his complexion." "Behold me on my knees. I ask your pardon, La Chouette; and yours also, Tortillard. Well, are you satisfied!" said the Brigand kneeling in the middle of the road. "Now you will not abandon me—speak?"

This strange group, standing on the slope of the ravine, lighted

by the red gleams of twilight, was hideous to behold. In the middle of the road, the Brigand, in a supplicating manner, extended to the Borgnesse his powerful hands; his rough and tangled hair fell, like a mane, on his livid face; his red eyelids, half opened through fright, partly disclosed the immovable eye-balls, dull, glassy, dead—the look of a corpse. His formidable shoulders humbly bent. This Hercules knelt, tremblingly, at the feet of an old woman and a child. The Borgnesse, wrapped in a shawl of red tartan, her head covered with a cap of black tulle, from whence escaped some tresses of grey hair, stood over the bandit in all her stature. The long, tanned, wrinkled, besotted face of this old woman, with her crooked nose, expressed insulting and ferocious joy; her yellow eye sparkled like a live coal; her sinister smile parted her lips, shaded by long hairs, discovering three or four long teeth, yellow and decayed. Tortillard, dressed in his blouse, with the leather belt, standing on one foot, leaned on the arm of La Chouette, to maintain his equilibrium. The sickly and cunning face of this child, with a complexion as faded as his hair, expressed, at this moment, a wickedness at once diabolical and jeering.

"But promise me, then, at least, not to abandon me?" repeated the Brigand, frightened at the silence of La Chouette and Tortillard, who enjoyed his fear. "Are you no longer there? said the murderer, leaning down to listen, and mechanically advancing his arms. "Yes, yes, my man, we are here; don't be afraid. Abandon you!—rather die! Once for all, you must be assured, and I will tell you why I will not abandon you. Listen: I have always wished to have some one to feel my nails, man or beast. Before Pegriotte (who the devil return to me, for I have always my notion to wash her with vitriol)—before Pegriotte, I had a girl, who died under the punishment; that was the reason why I was sent to prison for six years. During that time I was the torment of the birds: I caught them to strip the feathers from them; but I had no fun for my pains; they can't stand anything. When I came out of prison the Goualeuse fell under my clutches, but the little hussey escaped, while there was some of her skin left to amuse one's self with. After that I had a dog, who suffered as much as she did: I finished by cutting off one of his legs before and one behind; that made him look so awkward that I laughed ready to split my sides!"

"I must do just so to a dog that I know, and who bit me,"

said Tortillard to himself. "When I met you, my man," continued La Chouette, "I was just about finishing a cat. Well, now you shall be my cat, my bird, my Pegriotte—you shall be my beast of suffering. Do you comprehend, my man. Instead of a bird or a child, to torment a wolf or a tiger, that's what I call rather select, heiu?" "Old she-devil!" cried the Brigand, with renewed rage. "Come now you are angry with your old woman. Well, leave her; you are the master. I don't take you without your consent." "Yes, the door is open; march, no-eyes, and straight ahead!" said Tortillard, screaming with laughter. "Oh, let me die, die!" cried the Brigand, throwing about his arms. "You repent, my man; you have already said this. You die! You joke: you are as solid as the Pont-Neuf. Stop, now; you must live for the happiness of your Chouette. I will put you in misery from time to time, because it is my pleasure; and you must earn the bread I give you; but if you behave yourself, you shall assist me in all my good jobs, like to-day, and in others that are better, where you can serve me. You shall be my dog: when I say to you, bring, you shall bring; bite, you shall bite. And now, say, my man. I don't want to take you by force, at least. If, instead of the life I propose to you, you prefer to have an income, ride in a carriage with a pretty little wife, to be decorated with a cross of honour, to be made a great judge, and to see clear, instead of being blind, don't be backward; it is very easy; you have only to say it; it shall be served up smoking hot. Shan't it, Tortillard?" "Smoking hot, all boiling, right off," answered the son of Bras-Rouge, chuckling. But, leaning suddenly towards the ground, he said in a low voice, "I hear somebody walking; conceal ourselves. It is not the young girl, for they came from the same side she came from." In a few minutes, a strong country girl, followed by a large dog, and carrying on her head a covered basket, crossed the ravine, and took the path which had been followed by the priest and La Goualeuse.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PARSONAGE.

The last rays of the setting sun disappeared slowly behind the imposing mass of buildings of the Chateau d'Ecouen, and the

woods that surrounded it; on every side, as far as the eye could reach, were spread out immense fields, whose brown furrows were hardened by the frost; a vast solitude of which the hamlet of Bouqueval seemed the basis. The perfectly serene and cloudless sky was mottled in the west with long streams of purple, a certain sign of wind and cold; these colours, at first very bright, became of a violet hue as the twilight advanced and the night came on.

A young moon, like the half of a ring of silver, began to shine softly in the midst of the azure and shade. The silence was profound, the hour solemn. The abbé stopped for a moment on the hill to enjoy the appearance of this fine evening.

After a few moments reflection, extending his trembling hand towards the horizon, half obscured by the shades of evening, he said to Fleur de Marie, who walked pensively at his side, "See now, my child, this immensity, whose boundaries cannot be seen, —not the least noise is heard—it seems to me that silence and infinity give us almost an idea of eternity. I say this to you, Marie, because you are sensible of the beauties of creation. Often have I been touched with the religious admiration with which they inspire you, who have been so long debarred from them; are you not struck as well as me with the imposing calmness of this hour?" Marie answered not a word.

Astonished, the abbé looked at her; she wept. "What is the matter, then, my child?" "My father, I am very unhappy!" "Unhappy! you, now unhappy?" "I know I have no right to complain of my lot, after all that has been done for me. Yet—" "Yet?" "Ah, my father, pardon these sorrows; they offend, perhaps, my benefactors." "Listen, Marie; we have often asked the reason of the grief that hangs over you, and which causes your second mother, the most lively, inquietude. You avoid answering us; we have respected your secret, and have been afflicted that we could not solace your sorrows." "Alas, my father, I cannot tell you all that passes within me. Thus, like you, just now, I felt myself troubled at the sight of this calm and peaceful evening. My heart is broken, and I wept."

"But, what is the matter, Marie? You know how much we love you. Come, tell me all. Besides, I can tell you that the day draws near, when Madame Georges and Mr. Rodolphe will present you to the font for baptism, in taking before God the engage-

ment to protect you always." "Mr. Rodolphe? he who saved me!" cried Fleur de Marie, joining her hands; "he will deign to give me this new proof of affection! oh, hold! I will conceal nothing from you, my father; I fear too much to be ungrateful." "Ungrateful! and how?" "To make myself understood, I must speak of the first days I came to the farm."

"I listen to you; we will talk as we walk on." "You will be indulgent, won't you, my father? What I am going to tell you is, perhaps, very wicked." "The Lord has proved to you that he is very merciful. Take courage." "When I learned, on arriving here, that I should not leave the farm and Madame Georges," said Marie, after a moment's pause, "I thought I was in a dream. At first I felt as if I were stunned with happiness; at each moment I thought of Mr. Rodolphe. Often, all alone, and in spite of myself, I raised my eyes to heaven, as if to seek him there, and thank him. At length—I accuse myself, my father—I thought more of him than of God; for he had done for me what God alone could do; I was happy; happy as one who had escaped for ever a great danger. You and Madame Georges were so kind to me that I thought myself then more to be pitied than blamed."

The abbé looked at Marie with surprise; she continued. "By degrees I became accustomed to a life so easy; I no longer felt afraid on awaking to find myself at the Ogresse's; I felt myself, as it may be said, to sleep with security; all my joy was to aid Madame Georges in her labours, to apply myself to the lessons you gave me, my father; and also to profit by your exhortations. Save some moments of shame when I thought of the past, I believed myself the equal of everybody, because every one was good to me, when one day—" Here her sobs interrupted her. "Come, now, be calm poor child; courage! go on."

Marie wiped her eyes, and thus continued:

"You may remember, my father, at the fête of All Saints, Madame Dubreuil 'fermière' of the Duke of Lucenay, at Arnouville, came with her daughter to pass some time here with us." "Doubtless, and I saw with pleasure that you became acquainted with Clara Dubreuil; she is an excellent young person." "She is an angel, my father; an angel. When I knew that she was coming to pass some days at the farm, my happiness was great; I only thought of the moment when she would arrive. At length

she came. I was in my room: I was to divide it with her, I arranged it all in order; they sent to seek me. I entered in the saloon, my heart beat: Madame Georges, in introducing me to this beautiful young girl, said, 'Marie, here is a friend for you.' 'And I hope that you and my daughter will be like two sisters,' added Madame Dubreuil.

Hardly had her mother said these words than Clara ran to embrace me. Then, my father," said Marie, weeping, "I do not know what suddenly passed within me; but when I felt the pure and lovely face of Clara touching my faded cheek, my cheek became burning with shame, with remorse. I remembered what I had been. I! to receive the caresses of a young person so modest! Oh! that seemed to me a mockery, an unworthy hypocrisy." "But, my child—" "Ah! my father," cried Marie, in a mournful manner, "when Mr. Rodolphe brought me from the cité, I had then vaguely an idea of my degradation. But do you think that the education, the counsels, the examples that I have received from Madame Georges and yourself, in cultivating my mind, have not, alas! made me comprehend that I have been more culpable than unfortunate? Before the arrival of Clara, when these thoughts tormented me, I stifled them in endeavouring to please Madame Georges and you, my father. If I blushed for the past it was to myself; but the sight of this young person of my own age, so charming; so virtuous, made me reflect on the distance that separated us for ever. For the first time I felt that there are crimes nothing can efface. Since that day, this thought never leaves me. In spite of myself, I dwell on it without ceasing; since that day I have no longer any repose.

And Marie wiped her eyes, filled with tears.

After having looked at her some time, with the most tender commiseration, the abbé answered, "Reflect, my child, that if Madame Georges wished to see you the friend of Madame Dubreuil, it is because she knew you worthy of it from your good conduct. The reproaches you make yourself are almost addressed to your second mother." "I know it, my father, I was wrong without doubt; but I could not overcome my shame and fear. This is not all; I want courage to finish." "Go on Marie; so far your scruples, or rather, your remorse, prove in favour of your heart." "Clara once established on the farm, I was as sad as I at first thought I should be happy, in thinking I should have a

companion of my own age; she, on the contrary, was all joyous. Her bed was prepared in my room. The first night, before we retired, she embraced me, and said she loved me already she asked me to call her Clara, as she called me Marie. Then she prayed, saying she would join my name in her prayers, if I would do so for her. I dared not refuse that. After talking for some time, she fell asleep; I had not yet retired; I approached her; I regarded her angel face in weeping; and then, in thinking that she slept in the same room with me, who had been found at the Ogresse's with robbers and assasins, I trembled as if I had done a bad action. I went to bed; I had fearful dreams; I saw again the sinister figures that I had almost forgotten, the Chourineur, the Brigand, La Chouette. Oh! what a night! My God! what a night! what dreams!" said she shuddering at the thought. "Poor Marie!" said the abbé, with emotion; why have you not confided this to me before? I would have consoled you. But continue." "I slept very late; Clara came to awaken me with a kiss. To conquer what she called my coldness and prove her friendship, she wished to confide to me a secret; as soon as she was eighteen, she was to be united to the son of a farmer of Goussainville, whom she loved tenderly. Then she related to me, in a few words, her past life; a life simple, calm, happy; she had never left her mother, she would never leave her: for her betrothed would assist her father on his farm. 'Now Marie,' said she, 'you know me as if I were your sister; relate your life.' At these words I thought I should have died with shame. I blushed, I stammered. I was ignorant what Madame Georges might have said of me; I feared to contradict her. I answered vaguely that I was an orphan and brought up by strict people. I had not been very happy in my childhood, and that my happiness dated from the time of my residence with Madame Georges. Then Clara, more through interest than curiosity, asked where I was brought up; was it in the city or country? what was my father's name? Above all, she asked me if I remembered my mother. Each of the questions embarrassed as much as they pained me; for it was necessary to answer them with a falsehood and you have taught me, my father, how bad it is to tell an untruth. But Clara did not imagine that I could deceive her. I attributed the hesitation of my answers to grief which the sad recollections of my childhood caused me. Clara believed me, and pitied me with a kindness which tortured me. Oh! my

father! you can never know what I suffered in this first interview; how much it cost me not to say a word that was deceitful and false!" "Unfortunate child! may the wrath of God bear on those who, in casting you in the abominable way of perdition, will force you, perhaps, to suffer all your life the inexorable consequence of a first fault!" "Oh! yes, they have been very wicked, my father," answered Marie, bitterly; for my shame is indelible. This is not all; while Clara was telling me of the happiness she expected from her marriage, from her family circle, I could not but compare my lot with hers; for, notwithstanding the benefits I receive, my lot must be a sad one; you and Madame Georges, in making me understand virtue, have also made me understand the horrors of my past life. Alas! since the knowledge of good and evil is so fatal to me, why not leave me to my unhappy fate!"

"Oh! Marie! Marie!" "What I say is very wicked," is it not my father? Alas! that is what I dared not confess to you. Yes, sometimes I have been ungrateful enough to say, if I had not been taken away from the paths of infamy, well, misery would soon have killed me; at least, I should have died in ignorance of what I shall now never cease to regret." "Alas! Marie, that is fatal. A nature, even generously endowed by the Creator, had it been plunged but one single day in the mire from whence you were taken, would always preserve an indelible stigma. Such is the immutability of Divine Justice." "You see now, my father," cried Marie, mournfully, "I must despair even till death!"

"You must despair to efface from your life this desolating page, said the priest, in a grave and sorrowful voice; "but you must hope in the infinite compassion of the All Powerful here below, for you, poor child, tears, remorse, expiation: but one day, there above, "added he, raising his hand towards the starry firmament "there, pardon, eternal felicity!"

"Pity, pity, my God! I am so young, and my life may be so long!" said Marie, in a touching voice, falling with an involuntary movement, at the feet of the abbé. The priest was standing on the summit of the hill, not far from the parsonage. His black cassock, his venerable face, around which floated his long white hair, was lighted by the last gleams of twilight, one hand was raised towards heaven, the other abandoned to Marie, who covered it with kisses.

The hood of her grey mantle, at this moment thrown back upon

her shoulders, discovered the enchanting profile of the young girl —her supplicating and tearful expression—her neck of dazzling whiteness, where was seen the silken fastenings of her flaxen hair.

This simple and grand picture presented a striking contrast to the sorrowful scene which at the same moment occured between La Chouette and the Brigand, in the ravine of the hollow road. Concealed in the darkness of the gloomy road, assailed by cowardly fears, a frightful murderer, bearing the penalty of his misdeeds, was also kneeling: but before his accomplice, a jeering fury, a revengeful woman, who tormented him without pity, and excited him to new crimes—his accomplice—first cause of the misfortunes of Fleur de Marie—who was tortured by never-ceasing remorse. The exaggeration of her grief—is not to be conceived. Surrounded from her infancy with wicked, degraded, infamous beings; leaving her prison for the den of the Ogresse, another humble prison—never leaving the court of her jail, or the dark streets of the cité—this unfortunate girl, lived until then in profound ignorance of what was good and virtuous, as she was also a stranger to noble and religious sentiments, and the splendid magnificence of nature.

"Oh, sorrow for me!" said Marie, in desperation; "my whole life, was it as pure as yours, my father would henceforth be disgraced by conscience and the memory of the past." "Happiness for you, on the contrary, Marie; to whom the Lord sends this remorse, full of bitterness, but salutary. It proves the religious susceptibility of your soul. So many others, less nobly endowed than you are, had in your place soon forgotten the past, to enjoy only the present felicity. A delicate mind like yours finds sufferings where a vulgar one would find none. But each one of these sufferings will be recompensed, believe me! God did not leave you a moment in the evil path, but to reserve for you the glory of repentance, and the eternal recompense due to the expiation. Courage, then, my child. Advice, support, nothing shall be wanting. I am very old: but Madame Georges, and Mr. Rodolphe, have yet many years to live. Mr. Rodolphe above all—who shows so much interest for you—who follows your progress with a solicitude so enlightened; say, can you ever regret having met him?" Marie was about to answer, when she was interrupted by the peasant girl of whom we have spoken; she was one of the servants of the farm.

"Excuse me, sir," said she to the priest, "but Madame Georges told me to bring this basket of fruit to the parsonage, and so I can accompany Mlle. Marie back, for it is late; but I have brought Turk with me," said she, caressing an enormous dog from the Pyrenees, who could have defied a bear in combat. "Although there are no robbers in these parts, it is always more prudent."

"You are right, Claudine. Here we are at the passage. You will thank Madame Georges for me." Then addressing Marie in a low tone, the abbé said to her gravely, "I must go to-morrow to the conference of the diocese: but I shall return by five o'clock. If you wish, my child, I will expect you at the parsonage. I see, from the state of your mind, that you have need of a longer conference with me." "I thank you, my father," answered Marie; "to-morrow I will come, since you allow it."

"But here we are at the garden-gate," said the priest. "Leave the basket there, Claudine; my housekeeper will take it. Return quick to the farm with Marie, for it is almost night, and the cold increases. To-morrow, Marie, at five o'clock." "To-morrow, my father." The abbé entered his garden, and Marie and Claudine, followed by Turk, took the road to the farm.

CHAPTER V.

THE RENCONTRE.

Night came on clear and cold. Following the advice of the Brigand, La Chouette had gone with him to a part of the road at some distance from the pathway, and nearer the place where Barbillon was waiting with the hack. Tortillard, posted as a scout, watched the return of Marie, whom he was to entice into this ambush, by supplicating her to come to the assistance of a poor old woman. The son of Bras-Rouge had advanced a few steps from the ravine to listen; he heard, Marie, at a distance talking to the peasant who accompanied her. The young girl being no longer alone, the plot had, failed: he hastened to descend into the ravine, and ran to inform La Chouette. "There is some one with her," said he, in a low and breathless voice. "May the hangman strangle her!" cried she, in a rage. "Who is she with?" asked the Brigand. "Doubtless with the peasant girl who just now passed, followed

by a large dog; I heard a woman's voice," said Tortillard. "Hold, listen. Do you not ear the noise of their sabots? There are two of them I can take charge of the little one in the grey mantle; but the other one: what shall we do with her? Fourline can't see, and Tortillard is too weak to manage the other one, whom the devil choke; What shall we do?" repeated La Chouette.

"I am not strong; but, if you say so, I'll catch hold of the legs of the peasant girl with the dog. I'll hold one with my hands and teeth: I'll not let her go. During this time, you can carry off the little one, La Chouette." "And if they scream and kick? they will hear them at the farm," answered La Borgnesse. "They will have time to come to their assistance before we can reach the carriage. It isn't so easy, to carry off a woman who struggles!" "And they have a large dog with them," said Tortlliard. "Bah! if it was only that, with one blow of my shoe I'd settle him," said La Chouette.

"They come," continued Tortillard, listening to the noise of approaching footsteps; "they are descending into the ravine."

"But do speak now, Fourline; what do you advise, old Tadpole? Are you dumb?" "There is nothing to be done to-day," said the Brigand, "And the thousand francs of the gentleman in black?" cried La Chouette; "they are lost then? Rather—use your knife! your knife! Fourline. I'll kill the companion, so she shan't trouble us; as to the little one, Tortillard and I will gag her."

"But the man in black doesn't expect us to kill any one."

"Well, we'll put the blood down as something extra in the bill. He must pay well, since he is our accomplice."

"There they are! They descend," said Tortillard in a low voice.

"Your knife, my man!" cried La Chouette, also in a low voice.

"Oh! La Chouette!" said Tortillard in affright, stretching his hands towards La Borgnesse! "it is too much! Kill her? Oh, no, no!"

"Your knife, I tell you," repeated La Chouette, in a low voice, without paying any attention to the supplications of Tortillard, and taking off her shoes in great haste. "I take off my shoes," added she, "to surprise them by creeping after them. It is quite dark, but I can recognize the little one by her grey mantle, and

I'll kill the other one." "No!" said the Brigand, "to-day it is useless; there will be time enough to-morrow." "You are afraid," said La Chouette, with brutal contempt. "I am not afraid," answered the Brigand; "but you may fail, and thus lose all."

The dog which accompanied the peasant, scenting, no doubt, the people in ambush, stopped short, barked with fury, and paid no attention to the reiterated calls of the companion of Marie.

"Do you hear their dog? Here they are! Quick—your knife! or—useless;" cried La Chouette, with a menacing tone. "Come, then, and take it by force," said the Brigand. "It is finished! it is too late!" cried La Chouette, after having listened a moment with attention. "They are gone. You shall pay for this! Get out, gallows bird added she, furiously shaking her fist in his face; "a thousand francs lost by your fault!" "A thousand, two thousand, perhaps three gained, on the contrary," answered he, in a tone of authority. "Listen to me, La Chouette, and you will see if I was wrong in refusing to lend you my knife. You go to Barbillon—and both of you return with the carriage to the place where you are to meet the tall man in black. You will tell him that nothing can be done to-day, but that to-morrow she shall be carried off." "And you?" murmured La Chouette, still in a rage.

"Listen once more: The little girl goes alone every night to see the priest home; it was by chance, to-day, that she met some one; it is probable that to-morrow we'll have better luck. Return, then, to-morrow at this hour with Barbillon and the hack." "But you?"

"Tortillard will lead me to the farm where this girl resides: he will say we are lost; that I am his father, a poor workman, blind from an accident; that we are going to Louvres, to one of our relations, who will assist us; and that we became lost in the fields, by trying to find a shorter path. We will ask to pass the night at the farm, in a corner of the stable. They never refuse this. These peasants will believe us, and give us a lodging. Tortillard will examine well the doors and windows: there is always money among these folks at the approach of rent-day. I, who have owned property," added he, with bitterness. "I know this. We are now in the second week of January; it is the right time. The farm is situated, you say, in a lonely place; when we once know how to get in and out, we can return with some friends; it is an affair that can be managed."

"Always a trump: and what wisdom," said La Chouette, beginning to be appeased. "Go on, Fourline."

"To-morrow morning, instead of leaving the farm, I will complain that I am not able to walk. If they don't believe me, I will show the wound that I have had since I broke my chain, and which always troubles me. I will say that I got this wound from a bar of red-hot iron, while working at my trade as a machinist; they will believe me. Thus, I will remain at the farm a part of the day, so that Tortillard can have time to examine everything. When the evening comes, at the moment that the young girl, as is her custom, goes home with the priest, I will say that I am better, and that I am ready to go. We will follow the young girl at a distance, and we will return to await her here, when she goes home. Knowing us, she will have no fear; we will take hold of her, once she is within my arms, I'll answer for her; the thousand francs are ours. This is not all. In two or three days we can give the affair at the farm to Barbillon, and some others, and will divide whatever they get, since it is us who pointed out the busines." "Come, No-eyes, you haven't your equal," said La Chouette, embracing him. "But if, by chance, she should not take the priest home to-morrow?"

"We will wait the day after; it is one of those morsels that must be eaten cold and slowly; besides, it will make expenses that will augment the bill against the gentleman in black; and besides, once at the farm, I will know better how to judge, from what I hear, if we have any chance to carry her off by the means proposed, or whether we must arrange another way." "That will answer, my man! your plan is a famous one! I say Fourline, when you become altogether infirm we must make you consulting robber; you'll gain as much money as a lawyer. Come, embrace your Chouette, and make haste; these peasants go to sleep with the chickens. I'll clear out and find Barbillon; to-morrow at four o'clock, we'll be at the cross unless, in the mean time, he should be arrested for having killed the husband of the milk-woman, of the Rue de la Vielle-Draperie. A quarter of an hour after, I'll be here and wait for you."

"You've said it—till to-morrow, La Chouette. And I, who was going to forget to give some wax to Tortillard, if there should be any impressions to take at the farm. Here! make good use of it." "Fye, fye!" added the Borgnesse, giving a piece of wax to

Tortillard. "Yes, yes: papa showed me how. I have taken for him the impression of the lock of a little iron box that my master, the quack, has in the black cabinet."

"Very well; and that it don't stick, don't forget to wet your wax after having well moulded it in your hands."

"I know how," answered Tortillard. "But, you see, I do everything you wish me; and that is—because you love me a little, don't you, La Chouette?" "I love you! I love you as much as if you were my child, and the deceased Emperor, the great Napoleon, was your father!" said La Chouette, embracing Tortillard, who was immoderately flattered with this imperial compliment.

"Till to-morrow, Fourline, Farewell!" answered the Brigand, who, with Tortillard, directed his steps towards the farm, while La Chouette went to find Barbillon.

CHAPTER VI.

THE EVENING.

Is there anything more cheering than the kitchen of a large farm-house, at the hour of the evening repast—in the winter season, above all? Is there anything that more vividly recalls the calmness and happiness of a rural life? A proof of this could have been adduced at the sight of the kitchen of the Bouqueval farm. Its immense chimney, six feet in height by eight in breadth, resembled a wall of stone opening on a furnace. On the black hearth blazed immense logs of oak and beech. This immense fire sent as much light as heat to all parts of the kitchen, and rendered useless the light of a lamp suspended from the main beam of the ceiling. Large kettles and saucepans of red copper were ranged on the shelves, shining like silver; an antique fountain of the same metal sparkled like a mirror not far from a kneading trough of walnut, carefully polished, and from whence arose a most refreshing odour of new-made bread: a large table, covered with a coarse cloth, but of dazzling purity, occupied the middle of the room; the place of each was marked by a plate of delft-ware, and spoon and fork of iron, glistening like silver. In the middle of the table a large tureen, filled with vegetable soup, smoked like a crater, and covered with its savoury fumes a formidable plate of ham and cab-

bage, and another palte, not less formidable, of a ragout of mutton and potatoes; finally, a quarter of roast veal, flanked by two salads, and accompanied by two plates of potatoes and two cheeses completed the repast. Three or four stone pitchers, filled with foaming cider made on the farm, and as many loaves of bread, as large as millstones, were at the discretion of the labourers.

An old shepherd's dog, almost without teeth, owed to his great age and former services the permission to remain by the fireside. Using modestly and discreetly this privilege, with his muzzle elongated on his two outstretched paws, he followed with an attentive eye the different culinary revolutions which preceded the supper. This venerable dog answered to the name, somewhat pastoral of Lysander. Perhaps the ordinary of the people of this farm will appear somewhat sumptuous; but Madame Georges (faithful to the views of Rodolphe) ameliorated as much as possible the condition of her workmen, exclusively chosen among the most honest and industrious of the country. They were well paid; they were made comfortable and happy; thus, to become a labourer on the farm of Bouqueval was the aim of all the good workmen of the district; an innocent ambition, which kept alive a sort of emulation, so much the more to be praised as it turned to the profit of the masters they served; for no one could present himself to obtain a vacant place on a farm unless he had the best recommendations from his former employer.

Rodolphe created thus, on a small scale, a kind of model farm, not only destined to the improvement of agriculture or the breed of cattle, but, above all, to the amelioration of his fellow men; and he attained this end by making it their interest to be honest, active, and intelligent. After having served up the supper, and placed on the table a jug of old wine, destined to accompany the dessert, the cook rang the bell. At this joyous appeal, labourers, boys, milkmaids, girls, to the number of twelve or fifteen, entered gaily into the kitchen. The head of the table was occupied by an old labourer with white hair, with an honest and hardy face, and a slightly sneering mouth. Having never left the farm since his infancy, he was there employed as head labourer when Rodolphe bought the farm; the old servant was warmly recommended to him; he kept him, and he was invested, under the orders of Madame Georges, as a superintendant of the field labours. All the peasants seated themselves. After having

asked a blessing in a loud voice, he, after an old and holy custom, traced a cross on one of the loaves of bread with the point of his penknife, and cut off a small piece, representing the share of the Holy Virgin, or for the poor; he poured out a glass of wine afterward, under the same invocation, and put the whole on a plate which was piously placed on the centre of the table. At this moment the dogs without began to bark; the old Lysander answered by a sullen growl, drew up his nap, and showed two or three stumps which were yet quite respectable.

"There is some one by the walls of the court," said the superintendant. Hardly had he said these words, when the bell of the large door was rung. "Who can come so late?" said he; "every body has come in. Go and see, René."

René put back with regret into his plate an enormous spoonful of hot soup, which he had been blowing like a young Æolus, and went out of the kitchen.

"This is the first time, for a long while, that Madame Georges and Mademoiselle Marie have not taken their seat in the corner, to assist at our supper," said he; "I am hungry, but I don't eat with the same appetite." "Madame Georges has gone up to the room of Mademoiselle Marie; for when she returned from her walk, she was quite unwell, and has gone to bed," answered Claudine, the robust peasant girl who had accompanied Marie home. "Our good Mademoiselle Marie is only indisposed—I hope she is not sick?" asked the old labourer, anxiously. "No, no! God be praised! Madame Georges said it was nothing," answered Claudine; "otherwise she would have sent to Paris for Mr. David, the black doctor, who has already taken charge of her when she was sick. For myself, I have no great confidence. A white doctor, very well; 'tis Christian-like."

"Hasn't Mr. David cured Mademoiselle Marie?" "Yes," "Well?" "All the same; a black doctor scares me." "Didn't he put old Mother Anique on her feet, who, in consequence of a wound in her legs, had not been able to move from her bed in three years?" "Yes, yes; but a black doctor; just think; all black."

"Listen, my girl; what colour is your heifer Musette?"

"White, as a swan; and a famous milker."

"And your heifer Rosette?" "Black as a crow; a famous milker also—must be just to all." "And the milk of this black

heifer, what colour is it?" "Why, white to be sure; it is very simple, white as snow." "As white and good as that of Musette's?" "Why, yes." "Although Rosette is black?" "Although Rosette is Black—what difference does it make in the milk, whether the cow is black, red, or white?" "None." "Absolutely none." "Well, then; my girl, why cannot a black doctor be as good as a white one?" "Marry! it was on account of the skin," said the girl, after a moment's hesitation. "But, in truth, since Rosette the black has as good milk as Musette the white, the skin can make no difference." These reflections of Claudine on the difference between the races of the blacks and whites were interrupted by the return of René, who blew on his fingers with as much vigour as he had blown on his soup. "Oh! how cold it is to-night! it freezes as hard as a stone," said he, coming in; "better be within doors than without, in such weather."

"A frost commencing with an east wind will be hard and long; you ought to know that, boy. But who rang the bell?" asked the old labourer. "A poor blind man, and a child who conducts him."

CHAPTER VII.

HOSPITALITY.

"And what does he want, this blind man?" asked the superintendant. "The poor man and his son have got lost in going to Louvres by the cross-road. As it is so cold and the night so dark, for the sky is now overcast, the blind man and his boy asked permission to sleep in the stable. Madame Georges is so good that she never refuses hospitality to an unfortunate; she will certainly consent to give a lodging to these poor people; but we must ask her. Go and see, Claudine."

"And where is he waiting, this poor man?"

"In the little granary." "Why did you put him in the granary?"

"If he had remained in the court, the dogs would have torn him to pieces, he and the boy. Yes I had as much as I could do—Be quiet, Turk! here, Medor! down, Sultan! I have never seen them so much enraged. And yet on this farm they are never set at beggars, as they are in some places." "Faith, my children, the poors' portion has been reserved for some purpose. Sit closer—

so! Put two more covers on, one for the blind man, the other for his son; for surely Madame Georges will let them pass the night here."

"It is very astonishing that the dogs should have been so furious said René to himself; "there was Turk, above all, that Claudine took with her to the parsonage; he was like one possessed. When I patted him to appease him, his hair stood up like a porcupine. What do you say to that, heiu! you who know everything?" "I say, that the dumb beasts know some things better than I do. During the hurricane this autumn, which changed the little river into a torrent, when I returned at dark of night, with my farm horses, seated on the old roan, may the devil take me, if I should have known how to pass the ford, for I couldn't see my hand before my face! Well! I laid the bridle on the neck of old roan, and he found all alone what none of us could have found. Who taught him that?" "He who teaches the swallows to build their nests under the eaves, and humming-birds in the midst of the rosebushes. Well! Claudine," said the old oracle to the dairy-maid, who entered carrying on her arm two pair of white sheets, diffusing an odour of sage and vervaive. "Madame Georges has ordered the blind man and his boy to be kept here to-night, hasn't she?"

"Here are the sheets to make their bed in the little room at the end of the corridor," said Claudine. "Go, and bring them in, René. You, my girl, place two chairs by the fire; they must warm themselves a little before they can eat: they must be very cold."

The noise of the dogs was again heard, and the voice of René trying to appease them. The door of the kitchen was pushed open; the Brigand and Tortillard entered with precipitation, as if they had been pursued. "Take care of your dogs!" cried the Brigand in affright. "They were near biting us."

"They have torn my blouse," said Tortillard, still pale with fear. "Don't be afraid, my good man," said René, shutting the door; "but I have never seen our dogs so wicked: sure it is the cold makes them cross. The beasts, perhaps, have reason; they wish, perhaps, to bite, by way of getting warm!"

"Now, your turn!" said the labourer, stopping old Lysander just at the moment, as, growling, he was about to spring on the new-comers. "He had heard the other dogs bark, and thinks he must do as they do. Will you go to sleep at once, old savage?"

At these words, accompanied by a significant kick, Lysander

retired, still growling, to his usual place at the fire. The Brigand and Tortillard remained at the door of the kitchen, not daring to advance.

Wrapped in a blue coat with a fur collar, his hat drawn over his black cap, which almost concealed his face, the Brigand held the hand of Tortillard, who leaned against him, looking at the peasant with defiance.

The features of the Brigand were so hideous, that the inhabitants of the farm remained for a moment stupified, some with disgust, others with affright; this impression did not escape Tortillard; the fear of the peasants reassured him; he was proud of the feelings his companion inspired. This first movement over, the superintendant, only thinking of fulfilling the duties of hospitality, said to the Brigand, "My good man, draw near to the fire; you will first warm yourself. Afterward you will sup with us, for we were about to sit down when you came. But what a head I have! it is not to you but to your son, I must speak, since you are, unfortunately, blind. Here, my child; conduct your father to the fire."

"Yes, my good sir," answered Tortillard, in a nasal and hypocritical voice; "may God return your charity! Follow me! take care, added he to the Brigand, guiding him to the fire-place. At first Lysander howled in a low tone; but having scented for a moment the Brigand, he uttered that kind of mortal cry which is commonly called the death-howl.

"Hell!" said the Brigand to himself; "is it, then, blood that these cursed animals scent? I wore these pantaloons the night of the assassination of the cattle-merchant." "I declare, it is astonishing," whispered René: "old Lysander has set up the death-howl at the strangers."

The cries of Lysander were so piercing, so plaintive, that the other dogs heard them, and, according to the habits of the canine race, they repeated or answered these horrible howlings. Although but little superstitious, the labourers looked at each other with affright. And, truly, what was passing seemed very singular. A man they could not look at without horror entered the house; then the dogs, until then very quiet, became furious, and uttered those plaintive cries which, according to the popular belief, indicated the approaches of death.

The Brigand himself, notwithstanding his infernal audacity,

shuddered for a moment on hearing the funeral cries which burst forth on his arrival—he—an assassin!

Tortillard, sceptical, brazen, corrupted, as we may say, at his mother's breast, alone remained indifferent at the moral effect of this scene. No longer afraid of being bitten, this miserable abortion laughed at that which alarmed the people of the farm, and made the Brigand shudder. The first surprise being over, René went out, and the cracks of his whip were soon heard, dissipating the mournful forebodings of Turk, Sultan, and Medor. At the end of a few moments the frightful ugliness of the Brigand inspired them more with pity than horror; they pitied the lameness of the little boy, and began to find his cunning face quite interesting, and praised much the great attention he showed to his father.

The appetite of the people, for a moment forgotten, was awakened with new energy, and for some moments nothing was heard but the noise of the knives and forks. They could not, however, help remarking the tender care the child took of the blind man. Tortillard prepared every thing for him, cut his bread, and poured out his drink with an attention quite filial. This was the fine side of the picture, now mark the reverse; as much from cruelty as by the spirit of imitation, natural at his age, Tortillard experienced a cruel enjoyment in tormenting the Brigand, from the example of La Chouette, whom he was proud thus to copy, and whom he loved with a kind of devotion. How this perverse child did feel the need of being beloved. How did he feel happy from the semblance of affection shown him by La Chouette. Tortillard, seated at the table, had the wickedness to refine his pleasures by forcing the Brigand to bear his ill-treatment without winking. He compensated, therefore, each of his ostensible attentions to his supposed father by a kick under the table, particularly directed to the old wound in the leg, of which the Brigand had spoken.

It needed all his fortitude to conceal his sufferings at each kick of Tortillard, as the little wretch always took care to commence his attacks when the Brigand was about to drink or speak. Nevertheless, he maintained his composure, concealing his rage and feelings, thinking (and the son of Bras-Rouge reckoned on it) that it would be very dangerous for the success of his designs, if they found out what was passing under the table. "Here, father, here is a nut nicely picked," said Tortillard, placing on his plate a walnut plucked from its shell.

"Very good, my child," said the superintendant; then addressing the Brigand, "you are very much to be pitied, my good man; but you have such a fine son, it must be a great consolation to you!" "Yes, yes, my misfortune is great, but without the tenderness of this dear child, I—" The Brigand could not repress a piercing cry.

The son of Bras-Rouge had this time hit the centre of the wound; the pain was excruicating.

"My God! what is the matter?" cried Tortillard, in a tearful voice, and, getting up from his seat, he threw both his arms around his neck.

At the first moment of rage and anger the Brigand had a mind to crush the child in his Herculean arms, and pressed him so closely to his breast, that the child, losing his breath, made a slight groan. But instantly reflecting that he could not do without his services, he let him go, and pushed him on his chair. In all this the peasant only saw an interchange of paternal and filial tenderness; the pallor and suffocation of Tortillard appeared to them to be caused by the emotion of this good son. "What is the matter, my good man? Your cry just now has made your child pale. Poor little fellow! look, he can hardly breathe! "It is nothing," answered the Brigand, recovering his sang froid. "I am by trade a locksmith; Sometime since, in working with the hammer a bar of iron, I let it fall on my legs, and it made such a deep burn, that it is not yet healed. Just now I hit it against the leg of the table, and I could not keep from screaming out." "Poor man!" said Tortillard, recovering from his emotion, and casting a diabolical look at the Brigand; "it is true, my good gentlemen, they could never cure his leg. Alas! no, never! I'd willingly have it—so that he should no longer suffer, poor dear man." The women look at Tortillard with much affection. Well, my good man, it is unfortunate for you that you did not come to the farm three weeks since, instead of to-night." "Why so?" "Because we had here for some days a doctor from Paris, who has a sovereign remedy for diseases of the leg. A good old woman of the village who hadn't walked for three years; the doctor applied some ointment—now she, runs about like a Biscayan, and she means soon to walk to the Allée des Veuves, at Paris, to thank her deliverer. You know it's a long road. But what is the matter? does the wound hurt you again?"

These words, 'Allée des Veuves,' awakened such terrible recollections, that he could not refrain from shuddering and contracting his hideous features. "Yes," he answered, endeavouring to recover himself, "another spasm."

"Dear father, be quiet, I'll rub your leg carefully to-night," said Tortillard. "Poor little fellow!" said Claudine, "how he loves his father!" "It is really a pity," continued the superintendant, addressing the Brigand, "that this worthy doctor is not here; but I know he is as charitable as he is learned; in returning to Paris, let your son conduct you there, he will cure you, I am sure of it; his address is not difficult to remember, there are not many doctors in that quarter, above all black doctors—for you must know that he is black, this excellent Doctor David."

The features of the Brigand were so dreadfully scarred, that his paleness could not be perceived. Nevertheless he turned pale, frightfully pale, at the name of David, the black physician.—

It was this black, who, by the orders of Rodolphe, had inflicted on him a terrible punishment, of which at each moment he suffered the horrid consequences. This was a fatal day for the Brigand. The morning he had endured the tortures of La Chouette and the son of Bras-Rouge; he arrives at the farm, the dogs raise the death-howl at his appearance, and wish to devour him; finally, chance conducts him to a house where some days sooner he would have met his executioner. Separately, these circumstances would have been enough to excite both the rage and fear of the Brigand, but coming all at once, the blow was too violent. For the first time in his life he experienced a kind of superstitious terror—he asked himself if chance alone could have brought about incidents so strange.

The Superintendant, not perceiving his agitation, continued: "Besides, my good man, when you go, we will give the address of the doctor to your son; it will oblige Mr. David to put him in the way of serving any one; he is so good! it is a pity he always looks so sad. But come—let us drink a glass to the health of your future deliverer."

"Thank you—I am not thirsty."

"Drink, then, dear father, drink, it will do you good—good for your stomach, added Tortillard, placing a glass in the hands of the blind man.

"No, no, I don't want to drink any more," answered he."

"It isn't cider, but old wine," said the labourer; "there are many citizens who don't drink half so good. Marry! this is no common farm—what do you think of your ordinary?" "It is very good," answered the Brigand, mechanically, more and more absorbed with his sinister thoughts.

"Well! it is every day just so; hard work and good repast, good conscience and good bed; in four words behold our life: we are seven cultivators here, and without boasting we do as much as fourteen. To the daily labourers, one hundred and fifty crowns per month; to the dairy-maids sixty crowns; and besides, we have one-fifth of what the farm produces. Marry! you can comprehend that we don't let the land have much rest; for the poor old nurse, the more she produces the more *we* have."

"Your master can get very rich by these means." "Our master? oh! a very different master from most masters. He has a way to get rich peculiar to himself." "What do you mean to say?" asked the blind man, who wished to enter into conversation to get rid of his gloomy thoughts; "your master must be an extraordinary man?" "Extraordinary in every respect, my good man; but stop, chance has brought you here, since this village is some distance from the high road. You, perhaps, will never return here; you shall not leave it, at least, without knowing who our master is, and what he does with this farm."

CHAPTER VIII.

A MODEL FARM.

"Just imagine, one day, our master said to himself, 'I am very rich—good; but that don't make me eat two dinners. If I were to make those dine who don't dine at all, and better even than those good people who can't always get enough? I'faith, that suits me—to work!' And our master did go to work. He bought this farm which, then, was of no great value, and did not employ more than three ploughs. At the head of the farm he placed a worthy woman, as respectable as she was unfortunate; that is the way he always chooses. He said to her, 'This house shall be like the house of God, open to the good, but shut to the wicked; lazy beggars must be driven away, but to those who are willing to work, always give assistance: this will not humiliate

those who receive, but will profit those who give; the rich who are not charitable do not deserve their riches.' Formerly, there was a road direct from here to Ecouen, which shortened the distance a good league; but it was so broken up, so rough, that no one could pass; it was death to the horses and carriages: a little labour and some money, furnished by the neighbouring farmers, would have put the road in order; but just as much as every one wished to see the road mended, just so much did every one hold back the labour and money. Our master seeing this, said, 'The road must be made; but as those who should contribute do not, as it is an accomodation road, it will be of service to those who have horses and carriages one of these days, but it shall profit, first, those who have but their two arms, industry, and courage.' Thus, for example, a stout fellow, does he knock at the door, saying, 'I am hungry, and I want to work.' 'My lad, here is some good soup, a pick-axe, and a shovel; some one will show you the Ecouen road; work twelve feet each day, and at night you shall have forty sous; six feet, twenty sous; three feet, ten sous; otherwise, nothing. I will inspect the work every evening, and see what each has done."

"And when you think that there are scoundrels mean enough to eat the soup, and steal the pick-axe and spade," said René, with indignation, "that must have disgusted him with doing good." "That's true," said several of the labourers.

"Come, my children," continued he, "only see, should one not plant nor sow, because there are caterpillars, or devils, and other vermin, which destroy the leaves or consume the grain? No, no; the worms must be destroyed; the good God, ever bountiful, causes new buds to shoot forth; new corn to grow; the damage is repaired, and it is hardly to be perceived that the worm has passed there. Is it not so, my good man?" said the old labourer to the brigand. "Without doubt; without doubt;" answered he, seeming to reflect profoundly.

"As for women and children, there is, also, work for them, according to their strength," added the old labourer.

"And yet," said Claudine, "the road does not get along fast." "Marry! my girl, that proves that there are not many wanting work in these parts."

"But, for an infirm person, like me, for instance," said the brigand, "will they not grant me, for charity's sake, a

place for shelter, a piece of bread for the short time that remains for me to live? Oh! if that could be, my good people, I'd pass the rest of my life in blessing your master."

The brigand spoke, then, sincerely. He did not repent of his crimes, but the peaceable and happy life of the labourers excited so much the more his envy, when he thought of the frightful future reserved for him by La Chouette—a future he had been far from anticipating, and which made him regret, still more, in having sent for his accomplice, which prevented, for ever, the possibility of living with the honest people the Chourineur had placed him with. The old man looked at him with astonishment. "But, my poor man," said he, "I did not think you were entirely without resources?"

"Alas! my God, yes. I lost my eyesight by an accident. I am going to Louvres to seek assistance from a distant relation; but you understand; people are so hard-hearted," said the brigand.

"Oh, no one could be so selfish," answered the old man; "a good, an honest workman as you are, unfortunate, with such a nice child, so good a son, would soften a stone. But the master who employed you before your accident, why doesn't he help you?" "He is dead," said the brigand, after a moment's hesitation; "he was my only friend."

"But the hospital for the blind?" "I am not old enough to enter." "Poor man! you are much to be pitied."

"Well, do you think that, if I do not find at Louvres the assistance that I hope for, that your master, whom I respect already without knowing him, would have pity on me?"

"Unfortunately, do you see, the farm is not an hospital: ordinarily, we allow the infirm to pass a night or day here, then we give them some money, and the good God has them in his holy keeping." "Then I have no hope to interest your master in my sad fate?" said the brigand, with a sigh of regret. "I tell you our rules, my good man; but our master is so generous, so kind, that he is capable of doing everything."

"You think so?" cried the brigand; "can it be possible that he would consent to let me live here in a corner? I should be happy with so little."

"I tell you our master is capable of doing anything. If he consents to keep you on the farm, you will not have to conceal

yourself in a corner: you would be treated as we are; then, like to-day, we would find something for your son to do, suitable to his age and strength; good counsels and good examples would not be wanting for him; our venerable priest would instruct him, with the other children of the village; and he would grow up in grace, as is said. But for all this, you must speak, to-morrow morning, frankly, to our mistress. If she becomes interested for you, your business is done. As regards charity, our master never refuses any thing to our lady."

"Oh, then I will speak to her; I will speak to her!" cried the brigand, joyously, already imagining himself delivered from the tyranny of La Chouette.

This hope found no echo in Tortillard, who felt no disposition to profit by the offers of the old labourer, and grow up in grace under the auspices of a venerable priest. The son of Bras-Rouge had no rural likings, and not at all a pastoral turn of mind; besides, faithful to the traditions of La Chouette, he would have seen, with lively displeasure, the brigand withdraw himself from their common despotism; he wished, therefore, to recal to reality the man who was wandering already, amid rustic and smiling illusions.

"Oh, yes," repeated the brigand; "I will speak to her—to your mistress; she will have pity on me, and—"

Tortillard gave him, at this moment, quietly, a vigorous kick, and touched the right spot. The pain interrupted and abridged the phrase of the brigand, who repeated, after a nervous shuddering, "Yes; I hope this good lady will have pity on me." "Poor dear man," said Tortillard; "but you reckon, then, for nothing my good aunt, Madame La Chouette, who loves you so much? Poor Aunt Chouette! oh, she will never abandon you in this way! do you see? She would sooner come and reclaim you with our cousin, Barbillon." "This good man has relations among the fishes and birds," whispered René, maliciously giving a blow with his elbow to Claudine, his neighbour.

"Get out; to laugh at these unfortunate beings," answered the dairymaid, giving, in her turn, a blow with her elbow to René, hard enough to break almost his ribs. "Is Madame La Chouette one of your relations?" asked the labourer of the Brigand.

"Yes; one of our relations," answered he, mournfully.

Supposing he should find at the farm a place of unhoped-for refuge, he feared that the Borgnesse, through wickedness, would come and denounce him; he feared also that the strange names of his pretended relations, Madame la Chouette and Barbillon, mentioned by Tortillard, might awaken their suspicions; but as regards this, his fears were vain; René saw only the chance for a joke, which was very badly received by Claudine. "Is this the relation you go to seek at Louvres?" asked the old man.

"Yes," said the Brigand; "but I think my son is wrong in reckoning too much on her."

"Oh! my poor father, I am not deceived; no; she is so good, my Aunt Chouette. You know very well it is she who sent you water with which I dress your leg, and told me how to use it. It is she who said, 'Do for your poor father what I would do myself, and God will bless you!' Oh! my Aunt Chouette; she loves you so much, that—"

"It is well," said the Brigand, interrupting Tortillard; "that will not prevent my speaking to the lady to-morrow, and implore her assistance in my favour with the respectable proprietor of this farm; but," added he, to change the conversation, and put a stop to the impudent talking of Tortillard, "concerning this farm; you promised to tell me what there was particular in the organization, or in what respects it differed from other farms."

"I am going to fulfil my promise. Our master, after having thus imagined what he called the alms of labour, said to himself, 'There are establishments for the encouragement of the breed of horses, cattle, improvements in ploughs, and many other things. My opinion is, that it would be time well spent to invest something to ameliorate, to improve our fellow-men. Good cattle is very well; good people will be much better, but more difficult to manage. With heavy oats and fine pasture, clear water and pure air, constant care and good shelter, horses and cattle will thrive to your wishes, and give satisfaction; but for man, ah, it is another thing; it is not so easy to make a man good and honest as it is to make an ox fat. The pasturage profits the beast because, grateful to his taste, it pleases as well as fattens him; well, my opinion is, that to make a man profit by good counsels, you must make him sensible that it to his advantage to follow them."

"Just as the ox finds it to his account to eat the fine grass; is it not?'" "Just so, my man."

"But, sir," said another labourer, "I have heard of a kind of farm where young criminals, who, notwithstanding this, behaved very well, learned agriculture, and were treated like young princes." "It is true, my children, and it is very praiseworthy; it is humane and charitable never to despair of the wicked: but we must also make the good not despair. An honest, industrious young man, being desirous to do right, and learn to work, presenting himself to this farm of young ex-robbers, would be asked, 'My boy, are you anything of a robber, or a vagabond?' 'No.' 'Well, there's no place for you here.'"

"It is quite true what you say," said René. "They do for rogues what they will not do for honest men; they improve beasts, but not men."

"It is to set an example, and remedy this, that our master has established this farm. I know well that there is a recompense for honest folks above; but above—marry! it is far off! and many (we must pity them, my children) have not sharp enough eyes, nor long enough breath, to reach there; and besides, where will they find time to look above? During the day, from sunrise to sunset, bent to the earth, they dig and dig it again for their masters; the night, worn out, they sleep on their truckle beds. On Sundays they get drunk at the taverns, to forget the fatigues of yesterday, and those of the morrow: and thus it is these labours produce nothing for these poor people. After their hard work, is their bread less black, their bed any softer, their children less puny, their wives any stronger to nourish them—nourish them! she who has no bread to eat when she is hungry! no, no. But, notwithstanding all this, I know well, my children, that their bread is black, but it is bread; hard is their couch, but it is a bed; sickly are their children, but they live. The unfortunate children would, perhaps, support their fate lightly, if they thought every one lived as they did. But they go to the city or the town on market days, and there they see white bread, thick and warm mattrasses, children blooming, like the roses of May, and so surfeited that they throw cakes to their dogs. Marry, then, on returning to their clay hovels, their black bread, their truckle beds, these poor people say, seeing their poor, suffering, emaciated, starving child, to whom they would gladly have brought one of the cakes they saw thrown to the dogs, 'Since there must be rich and poor, why were we not born rich? it is unjust. Why

shouldn't each one have a turn?' Without doubt, my children, what they say is very unreasonable, and does not serve to make the yoke any lighter; and yet this yoke, heavy as it is, they are destined to bear for ever, with no hope of lightening it, and no hope of knowing, some day, the happiness arising from prosperity. All their lives in that manner—marry, it seems long—long as a day of continued rain, without one little gleam of sunshine. Then they go to work in sorrow and disgust. Finally, the most of them say, 'Why should we work harder or longer? if the harvest is heavy or light, what is it to us? why tire ourselves for nothing? Let us remain strictly honest; crime is punished, let us commit no crimes; let us have the qualities of good beasts of burden: patience, strength, and docility.' These thoughts are all wrong, my children; from this feeling to idleness there is no great distance; and from idleness to vice there is still less. Unfortunately, those who, neither good nor bad, do neither good nor bad, are of the greatest number: it is, then, those, said our master, whose condition we must ameliorate neither more nor less than if they had had the honour to have been horses, or cattle with horns on their heads, and wood on their backs. Let us make it their interest to be active, wise, laborious, instructed, devoted to their duties; let us prove to them that, in becoming better, they will become materially happier: every one will profit by it, and so that they will profit by good counsels, give them here below a taste of the happiness that awaits them above. His plan made, our master gave notice in the neighbourhood that he wanted six labourers, and as many girls, for the farm; but he wished to select these from the best people in the district—those who could bring the best recommendations. They would be well paid, as we are, that is to say, like princes, nourished better than the citizens, and should have divided among them one fifth part of the whole products; they should remain two years on the farm, to give place to other labourers chosen on the same conditions; after five years, they could return again if there was any vacancy. Thus, since the establishment of the farm, labourers and workmen in the vicinity say, 'Let us be active, honest, and industrious; let us be remarked for our good conduct, and some day we may get a place on the farm of Bouqueval; there we will live as if in paradise for two years; we will improve in our calling, we will carry off a snug little sum, and then we can command

any place.' "I am already engaged to work on the farm of Arnouville, at M. Dubreuil's," said René. "And I am engaged for Gonesse," answered another labourer.

"You see, my good man, in this way every one profits: the farmers of the environs doubly profit; there are only twelve places to give away, but there are more than fifty candidates; now, those who can't obtain the place, are none the less deserving, is it not so? and, as they say, better luck next time; they remain, and make so many more good people in the neighbourhood. Look here, for one horse who gains the prize at a race, there are always a number to dispute the prize; well, those who don't gain, still they are very valuable, and can try another time. Heiu! my good man, when I told you that our farm was no ordinary one, and that our master was no common master—did I speak false?" "Oh, no," cried the Brigand, "and the more his goodness, his generosity, seems great, the more I hope he will have pity on my sad fate. A man who does so much good, so nobly, with so much intelligence, can never regard one benefaction more or less. But at least let me know his name, and that of your mistress," said he earnestly, "that I may bless them in advance." "I can comprehend your impatience," said the labourer; "ah, marry, you no doubt expect to hear high-sounding names? ah, yes, they are names sweet and gentle as those of the saints. Our mistress is called Madame Georges; our master's name is Rodolphe." "My wife! my executioner!" murmured the brigand, thunderstruck at this revelation.

CHAPTER IX.

THE NIGHT.

Rodolphe! Madame Georges!

The Brigand could not believe that he had been deceived by a fortuitous resemblance of names; before he had inflicted the terrible punishment, Rodolphe had told him that he had for Madame Georges the liveliest interest. And then the presence of the negro David proved him not to be mistaken. He recognized something providential, a fatality, at this discovery, which overthrew the hopes that he had founded on the generosity of the master of this farm.

His first movement was to fly. Rodolphe inspired him with invincible terror; perhaps at this moment he might be at the farm. Hardly had he recovered from his stupor, than he arose from the table, took the hand of Tortillard, and cried in a wild manner, "Let us go—conduct me—let us go hence."

The labourers looked at one another with surprise.

"You go, now? You must not think of it, my poor man," said the superintendant. "Ah! come, what bee has stung you? are you a fool?" Tortillard, seizing adroitly this idea, breathed a deep sigh, nodded his head in the affirmative, and, putting his finger on his forehead, gave the labourers to understand, that the reason of his pretended father was not very strong. The old labourer answered with a sign of intelligence and compassion. "Come, come, let us go," repeated the Brigand, seeking to drag the child out. Tortillard, absolutely deciding not to leave a warm shelter to wander about the fields this cold night, said, in a moaning voice:—

"My God! father, calm yourself; the attack will soon pass off; don't go out such a cold night, it will do you harm. I would prefer to see you angry with me, than to take you from here at such an hour." Then, addressing the labourers, he said, "Won't you help me to prevent father from going out, my good gentlemen?" "Yes, yes; be easy, my child," said the old labourer; "we will not open the door for your father—we will make him sleep here;" "You shall not force me to remain here," cried the Brigand; "and, besides, I'll incommode your master, Mr. Rodolphe. You told me the farm was not an hospital. Thus, once more, I say, let me go." "Incommode our master? Be easy. Unfortunately, he does not live at the farm; he does not come as often as we could wish. But, if he was here, you would not incommode him at all. This house is not an hospital, it is true; but I told you, that the infirm, as much to be pitied as you are, can always have a lodging."

"Your master is not here, then, to-night?" said the Brigand, in a more assured tone. "No; he will probably come, according to custom, in five or six days. Thus, you see, there is no reason in your objections. It is not probable that our good lady will come down to-night, otherwise she would convince you. Has she not ordered your bed to be made? Besides, if you don't see her to-night, you can speak to her to-morrow before your departure."

"No, no," said the Brigand in alarm; "I have changed my mind. My son was right; my relation at Louvres will take care of me. I will go and find her." "As you please," said the old man, believing he was conversing with one who was crazy. "You shall go to-morrow morning; but, as for setting out to night, don't think of it." Although Rodolphe was not at the farm, the fears of the Brigand were not quieted; notwithstanding he was so frightfully disfigured, he still dreaded that his wife might recognize him. And she might come in from one moment to another; in that case, he doubted not but that she would denounce him, and cause him to be arrested, persuaded that, in inflicting the terrible punishment, Rodolphe had, above all, satisfied the hatred and vengeance of Madame Georges. But he could not leave the farm; he found himself at the mercy of Tortillard. He resigned himself, then, to his situation; but, to avoid being surprised by his wife, he said to the labourer, "Since you assure me that I shall put you to no trouble, I accept the hospitality you offer me; but as I am very much fatigued, I will go to bed, if you will allow me; I wish to start to-morrow at daylight."

"Oh! to-morrow morning—when you please; we are early risers here; and, for fear that you may be lost again, some one will show you the road." "I will, if you wish, conduct the poor man," said René; "since madame has told me to take the cart to bring home some bags of silver from the notary, at Villiers-le-Bel." You will shew the road to this poor blind man, but you will go on foot; madame has changed her mind; she has reflected, and not without reason, that it was not worth while to have so large a sum of money at the farm; it will be time enough to go after the money on Monday; until then, it is as well there as here."

"Madame knows better than me what to do; but what is there to fear here, for money?"

"Nothing, thank God! But it is all the same; I would prefer to have here five hundred sacks of wheat, than ten sacks of crowns. Come," said he, addressing the Brigand and little Tortillard; "come, my good man, and you, my child, follow me," added he, taking a candle. Then, preceding the two guests of the farm, he conducted them to a small chamber, at the end of a long corridor, into which opened several doors.

The ploughman placed the light on the table, and said to the Brigand, "Here is your lodging-place; may God give you a good

night's rest; as to you, my child, you will sleep well, it is natural to your years."

The Brigand went and seated himself gloomily on the bed, to which he had been conducted by Tortillard. The little cripple made a sign to the ploughman as he left the room, and joined him in the corridor. "What do you want, my child?" "My God! my good sir, I am much to be pitied; sometimes, poor father has spasms in the night, like convulsions; I cannot help him, all alone; if I am obliged to call for help, can they hear me from here?"

"Poor little fellow," said the ploughman, with interest; "be comforted. Do you see that door there, alongside of the staircase?"

"Yes, my good sir, I see it." "Well, one of our boys sleeps there; you have only to go and wake him—the key is in the door; he will come and assist you."

"Alas, Sir, this boy, perhaps, will not be strong enough. Could you not come, you who are so good, so kind?"

"I, my child. I sleep, as well as the other men, in a building away at the end of the court; but be quite easy, René is very strong; he would take a bull by the horns. Besides, if you should actually need some one to assist you, he will go and call our old cook; she sleeps up stairs, in a room alongside of our lady; and, in case of need, she makes an excellent nurse."

"Oh, thank you, thank you! my good sir; I will go and pray for you, for you are very charitable to have so much pity for my poor father." "Well, my child, good night. I hope you will have no need of assistance for your father; go in, perhaps he wants you." "I go; good night, sir." "God bless you, my child," said the old ploughman; and he slowly retraced his steps to the kitchen.

With diabolical cunning, this dangerous child already had ascertained the information desired by La Chouette. He knew that the building where he was to sleep was only occupied by Madame Georges, Fleur de Marie, an old cook, and a farm boy. Tortillard, on entering the bed-chamber, took good care to keep a convenient distance from the brigand. He heard him come in, and said to him, in a low tone, "Where do you come from now, scoundrel?" "You are very curious, No-eyes." "Oh, you shall pay for all you have made me suffer and endure this night, you

devil's imp! cried the brigand, getting up furiously and groping his way along the wall to guide him. "I'll choke you! you wicked serpent."

"Poor man; we are so gay, playing blind man's buff with our dear child," said Tortillard, chuckling, and escaping in the easiest way the pursuits of the brigand. He at first, carried away without reflecting, with rage, was soon obliged to give up the chase. Forced to submit to his brazen persecution, until the time should arrive that he could revenge himself without danger, The Brigand, choking down his powerless anger, threw himself on the bed, swearing and cursing.

"Poor father, have you the toothache, that you swear in this manner? What would the abbé say if he heard you? he'd make you perform penance."

"Well, well," continued the brigand, after a long silence; "laugh at me, amuse yourself with my misfortunes, coward as you are! It is all very fine; ah, it is very generous!" "Oh, what stuff, generous! you are in a pet!" cried Tortillard, shouting with laughter; pardon me, with such ideas as these you ought to have worn mittens, when you did the business for those you robbed, before you became blind in both eyes."

"But I have never done you any harm—you. Why do you torment me thus?" "Because, in the first place, you said bad things to La Chouette; and when I think you wished to stay here, by wheedling the peasants—perhaps you would like to live on asses' milk?" "Scoundrel as you are! if there had been any possibility of my remaining here, at this farm, which I wish the thunder may strike now! you would almost have prevented it by your insolence."

"You remain here! oh, that's a good joke! and who would have been the *'beast of suffering'* for Madame La Chouette! Me! perhaps? Thank you, I'd rather be excused."

"Wicked abortion!" "Abortion, come, so much the more reason; I say, just like my Aunt La Chouette, there is nothing more amusing than to make you as mad as the devil—you, who would kill me with your fist. You are a funny fellow—get out—to night at the table—zounds! what a comedy I played all alone by myself—equal to anything at La Gaîté. At each kick I gave you quietly, rage brought the blood to your head, and your white eyes became red at the edges; they only wanted a little blue in the

centre; with that, they would have been tricoloured; two real cockades for a constable—what!"

"Come, come, you love to laugh you are lively; bah! it is natural at your age; I am not angry," said the Brigand, in an affected and unconcerned manner, hoping to soften Tortillard; but instead of blackguarding me, you'd better remember what La Chouette told you, you ought to examine everything, and take impres sions. Did you hear? they spoke of a large sum that they are to have here on Monday. We will return with our friends and we will do some good business. Bah! I was a great fool to wish to stay here. I should have had enough in a week of these good-natured peasants. Is it not so, my boy?" said the Brigand by way of flattering Tortillard. "You really would have given me pain—word of honour," said the son of Bras-Rouge chuckling.

"Yes, yes, there is a good affair to be done here; and even if there is nothing to steal, I will return to this house, with La Chouette to revenge myself," said the Brigand, in a voice trembling with rage and passion: "for it certainly was my wife who excited against me this infernal Rodolphe: in making me blind, has he not placed me at the mercy of the whole world, of La Chouette, of a chap like you? Well! since I cannot be revenged on him, I will be revenged on my wife. Yes, she shall pay for all; even if I have to set fire to this house, and perish beneath its ruins. Oh, I wish—,' "You wish you had hold of her, your wife, hey, old man. I tell you she is not ten steps from you; that is vexing! If I pleased, I'd conduct you to the door of her chamber, for I know where it is.

"You know which is her chamber!" cried the Brigand, with savage joy.

"Ah! come now," said Tortillard; "I am going to make you beg on your hind legs, like a dog asking for a bone. Attention, old Azor."

"You know where the room of my wife is?" repeated the Brigand, turning towards Tortillard. "Yes, I know; and what is more, there is only one of the boys who sleeps in the house; I know where his door is, the key is in it: crack! one turn, and he is fixed. Come, stand up, old Azor." "Who told you this?" cried the Brigand, rising involuntarily. "Good Azor, in the room next to your wife's sleeps the old cook; another turn of a key and we are masters of the house, masters of your wife, and of the

young girl in the grey mantle, whom we wish to carry off. Now, give us your paw, old Azor; hold up your head for your master."

"You lie, you lie! How could you know all this?"

"I am lame, but I am not a fool. Just now I made this old fool of a ploughman believe that during the night you had convulsions, and I asked him where I could find assistance if I needed it. Then he told me I might wake the boy or the cook, and he showed me where they slept—the one below, the other above, alongside of your wife."

After a long silence, the Brigand said in a calm voice, with sincere but frightful resolution.

"Listen. I have had enough of life. Just now—well—yes—I acknowledge it—I had a hope, which now makes my fate appear still more frightful; the prison, the galleys, the guillotine, are nothing to be compared to what I have suffered this morning; and this I shall have to endure for ever. Conduct me to the chamber of my wife; I have my knife— I will kill her. I shall be killed afterward; it's all the same to me. Hatred suffocates me—I shall be revenged—that will comfort me. What I now endure is too much—is too much for me, before whom every one trembled. Stop! do you hear? if you knew what I suffered, you would have pity on me. How, now! it seems as if my head would burst—my brain is on fire—my blood will suffocate me."

"A cold in the head, old man: I know it. Sneeze; it will clear it out," said Tortillard, screaming with laughter. "Will you take a pinch?" and striking the back of his left hand closed, as if he'd struck a snuff-box, he sung,

"In my box I have good snuff,
You shan't have any, that's enough."

"Oh! my God, my God! they wish to drive me mad:" cried the Brigand, becoming almost insane, from a concentration of hatred, rage, and implacable revenge. The exuberance of the strength of this monster could only be equalled by its impotence.

Let the reader imagine a famished wolf, harassed during an entire day by a child through the bars of his cage, and scenting at two paces from him a victim which would at once satisfy his hunger and rage. At the last sarcasm of Tortillard, the Brigand almost lost his senses. In default of a victim he wished, in his madness to shed his own blood. Blood choked him.

Gulliver recognizing the Princess's

For a moment he decided to kill himself; if he had had a loaded pistol in his hand, he had not hesitated. He fumbled in his pocket, and drew out a long knife, opened it, and raised it to strike; but, rapid as were these movements, reflection, fear, vital instinct, preceded them. Courage was wanting to the murderer: his arm fell on his knees.

Tortillard had followed these movements with an attentive eye: when he saw the inoffensive denouement of this tragic scene, he cried, chuckling, "Waiter, a duel!" The Brigand, fearing that he should lose his reason in a last and useless burst of rage, did not wish, as we may say, to hear this new insult of Tortillard. Despairing to escape from the cruelty of the child, he wished to make a last effort, by addressing himself to his cupidity.

"Oh," said he to him, in a voice almost supplicating, "conduct me to the door of my wife; you shall take what you wish from her chamber, and then leave me alone; you shall cry murder if you will. I shall be arrested, I shall be killed on the spot; so much the better. I shall die revenged. Oh, lead me; there must be some gold, some jewels in her room: I tell you you shall take all —for yourself alone—I only ask you to lead me to her door."

"Yes, you wish I should lead you to her door, and then to her bed, and then that I should tell you where to strike, and guide your hand: is it not so? you wish that I should serve as a handle to your knife, old monster," answered Tortillard, with an expression of contempt, rage, and horror, which, for the first time during that day, rendered serious his weasel face, heretofore impudent and bold. "I would be killed first—do you understand—than to be forced to conduct you to your wife." "You refuse?" The son of Bras-Rouge made no answer. He drew near with naked feet to the Brigand, who was seated on the bed holding his large knife in his hand; then with marvellous dexterity snatched the weapon, and with one bound gained the other side of the chamber. "My knife," cried the Brigand, stretching out his arms. "No, for you would be capable to ask to speak to your wife to-morrow, and then kill her, since you say you have enough of life, and you are coward enough not to dare to kill yourself."

"He defends my wife now:" cried the Bandit, whose mind began to wander. "Is he a devil, then, this little monster? Where am I? Why does he defend her?" "To make you mad," said Tortillard, and his expression resumed its mask of impudent rail

lery. "Ah, it is so:" murmured the Brigand almost in a state of insanity; "well, I shall set fire to the house: We will burn all together: I prefer this furnace to the other. The candle—the candle." "Ah, ah, cried Tortillard, bursting out with renewed laughter; "If some one had not blown your candle out—you would have seen that ours has been out for an hour." And Tortillard sung.

"My candle is out,
I have no more light."

The Brigand uttered a heavy groan, stretched out his arms, and fell at full length upon the floor; struck with a rush of blood to his head, he remained without movement.

"I understand, old man," said Tortillard; it's a feint to bring me alongside of you, and fetch me a clip. When you are tired of lying on the floor, you'll get up."

And he decided not to go to sleep, for fear of being surprised by the Brigand, he remained seated on his chair, with his eyes attentively fixed upon him, persuaded that it was only a snare, and that he was in no danger. To employ himself agreeably, he drew from his pocket a small purse of red silk, and counted slowly, with greedy eyes, the seventeen pieces of gold it contained.

The reader will recollect that Rodolphe, in giving the purse to Madame d'Harville, the day of the fatal rendezvous, had told her to go up to the garret of the Morels under pretence of giving them assistance. Madame d'Harville mounted the staircase rapidly, holding the purse in her hand, when Tortillard, descending from the quack's, spied the purse, pretended to fall in passing the the marchioness, giving her a violent push, and in the confusion carried it off. Madame d'Harville, alarmed, and hearing the steps of her husband, hurried on to the garret, without having the power to complain of the audacious robbery of the little urchin.

After having counted and recounted his gold, Tortillard, hearing no more noise about the house, went with naked feet, cautiously shading the candle with his hand, to take impressions of the four doors which opened on the corridor, ready to say, if he should be seen by any one, that he sought assistance for his father.

On re-entering, he found the brigand in the same position; for a moment alarmed, he listened, and heard that he breathed regularly; he believed he was still playing his game. "Always the same, then, old man?" said he to him.

Chance had saved the brigand from a congestion of the brain, which, no doubt, would have been mortal. His fall had occasioned a copious bleeding at the nose.

He afterward fell into a sort of feverish torpor, half sleep, half delirium; and after dreaming a frightful dream, he uttered a piercing cry, and awoke.

CHAPTER X.

THE LETTER.

Nine o'clock was striking as Madame Georges entered, softly into the chamber of Fleur de Marie. The sleep of the young girl was so light that she awoke immediately. A brilliant winter's sun shone gaily through the blinds and curtains of Persian chintz, lined with rose-coloured muslin, spreading a vermillion tint throughout the chamber, giving to her pale and charming face the colour which it wanted.

"Well; my child," said Madame Georges, seating herself on the bed, and kissing her forehead, "how do you find yourself?" "Better, madame, I thank you." "You have not been awakened early, this morning?" "No, madame." "So much the better. This unfortunate blind man and his son, to whom we gave a lodging last night, would leave the farm at day-break; I feared the noise they made in opening the doors might awaken you."

"Poor people; why did they go so soon?"

"I do not know. Last evening, when you were quiet, I went down to the kitchen to see them; but they had found themselves so much fatigued they had asked permission to retire. The old labourer told me that the blind man did not appear to be in his right senses; and all our people were struck with the touching attention paid him by his son. But, tell me, you have had some fever; I do not wish you should expose yourself to the cold today; you must not go out of the room."

"Madame, pardon me; I must go to-night at five o'clock to the parsonage: the abbé expects me."

"That would be imprudent; you have passed a bad night; I I am sure of it; your eyes are heavy."

"It is true. I have again had horrid dreams, I saw in my sleep

the woman who had ill-treated me when I was a child. I started from my slumbers, alarmed; it is a ridiculous weakness of which I am ashamed."

"And this weakness afflicts me, since it makes you suffer, poor child!" said Madame Georges, with tender interest, seeing her eyes filled with tears; throwing herself on the neck of her adopted mother, she concealed her face in her bosom.

"My God! what is the matter, Marie? you frighten me."

"You are so kind to me, madame, that I reproach myself for not having confided to you what I have confided to the abbé; to-morrow he will tell you himself; it will cost me too much to repeat to you this confession." "Come, come, child, be reasonable; I am sure that there is more to praise than blame in this great secret that you have told to our good abbé. Do not weep so much, you afflict me." "Pardon, madame, but, I cannot tell why, for two days past my heart sinks within me. Tears come into my eyes unbidden. I have gloomy presentiments. It seems to me some great calamity is about to overtake me." "Marie, Marie, I will scold if you allow yourself thus to be affected by imaginary terrors. Have we not real troubles enough to afflict us?"

"You are right, madame; I am wrong; I will try to overcome this weakness. If you knew, my God! how much I reproach myself for not being always gay, smiling, happy, as I ought to be; alas! my sadness must appear to you like ingratitude."

Madame Georges was endeavouring to console the poor girl, when Claudine entered, after having knocked at the door.

"What do you want, Claudine?" "Madame, Pierre has arrived from Arnouville in the cabriolet of Madame Dubreuil; he brings this letter for you; he says it is very urgent."

"Madame Georges read aloud as follows—

"My dear Madame Georges—You will render me a great service, and you will relieve me from great embarrassment, by coming quickly to the farm. Pierre will drive you over, and will take you back after dinner. I do not really know what to do; Mr. Dubreuil is at Pontoise about the sale of his wool; I have recourse, then, to you and Marie. Clara embraces her dear little sister, and awaits her with impatience. Try to come at eleven o'clock, to breakfast. Your sincere friend,

DUBREUIL."

"What can be the matter?" said Madame Georges to Marie. "Happily, the tone of the letter proves that it is nothing very serious." "Shall I accompany you, madame?" asked Marie.

"Perhaps it is not very prudent, for it is very cold. But, after all, it may be of service to you; you can wrap yourself up well."

"But, madame," said Marie, reflecting, "the abbé expects me at the parsonage this evening at five o'clock."

"You are right; we will return before that time, I promise you."

"Oh! thank you, madame; I shall be so happy to see Mademoiselle Clara."

"Again?" said Madame Georges, in a tone of mild reproach. "Mademoiselle Clara! Does she say 'Mademoiselle Marie,' in speaking of you?" "No, madame," answered Marie, casting down her eyes. "It is I who—"

"You! you are a cruel child, who only thinks of tormenting yourself; you forget, already, the promises you made just now. Dress yourself quickly, and warmly. We can arrive before eleven o'clock at Arnouville." Then, going out with Claudine, Madame Georges said, "Let Pierre wait a moment; we shall soon be ready."

CHAPTER XI.

RECOGNITION.

Half an hour after this conversation, Madame Georges and Fleur de Marie got into one of those large cabriolets so much used by the farmers in the environs of Paris; this carriage, drawn by a vigorous horse, and driven by Pierre, soon rolled over the smooth road which led from Bouqueval to Arnouville. The vast buildings and numerous dependencies of this farm bore witness of the importance of this magnificent property, which Mademoiselle Césarine de Noirmont had brought in marriage to the Duke de Lucenay.

The cracking of Pierre's whip notified to Madame Dubreuil the arrival of Fleur de Marie and Madame Georges. On descending from the carriage, they were joyously received by the mother and daughter.

Madame Dubreuil was about fifty years of age; her expression mild and affable; the features of her daughter, a pretty

brunette, with blue eyes and rosy cheeks, impressed one with goodness and candour.

To her great astonishment, when Clara sprung to her neck, Marie saw that her friend was dressed like a peasant girl instead of being attired as a young lady. "How, you also, Clara, disguised as a country girl?" said Madame Georges, embracing her. "Must she not imitate her sister Marie in every thing?" said Madame Dubreuil.

"She has had no peace until she also had her cloth jacket and woollen petticoat, just like your Marie. But no matter, Madame Georges," said Madame Dubreuil, sighing; "come, and let me tell you all my troubles."

On arriving in the saloon, with her mother and Madame Georges, Clara seated herself alongside of Fleur de Marie, gave her the best place by the fire, showed her a thousand attentions, took her hands in hers, to assure herself they were not cold, embraced her again and again, calling her her wicked little sister, for waiting so long before she came to see her. If the reader will recollect the conversation between Marie and the abbé, he will comprehend that she received these caresses with a mixture of humility, happiness, and fear.

"And what has happened, then, my dear Madame Dubreuil," said Madame Georges, "and how can I be of service to you?" "My God! in many ways. I will explain this to you. You do not know, I believe, that this farm belongs, in her own right, to the Duchess de Lucenay. It is to her direct that we make our accounts, without having anything to do with the duke's intendant." "In effect, I was ignorant of this." "You will see why I tell you now. It is, then, to the duchess, or to Madame Simon, her first femme de chambre, that we pay our rents. The duchess is so kind, so good, although a little quick, that it is a real pleasure to have anything to do with her; Dubreuil and I would go through fire to serve her. Marry! it is quite reasonable: I knew her when she was a little girl, when she came here with her father, the late Prince de Noirmont. Lately she asked us for six months' rent in advance. Forty thousand francs, that is not to be picked up in the road, as they say; but we had this sum in reserve, the portion of our Clara, and the next day the duchess had her money in fine golden louis. These great ladies have need of so many luxuries. And yet it is only within a year that she

t all exact in taking up her rents; formerly, she ap-
o be in want of money. But now it is very differ-

ar Madame Dubreuil, I cannot see how I can
you." "Stop, stop! you'll see. I tell you all
you what confidence the Duchess has in us, with-
a word about her being the god-mother of Clara,
ne is very fond of. Last night, then, I received by
ss this letter from the Duchess:—

'It is absolutely necessary, my dear Madame Dubreuil, that the little pavillion, in the orchard, should be in a state to be occupied the day after to-morrow: have everything carried there, carpets, curtains, &c. In short, let nothing be wanting, and make it as *comfortable* as you can."

"Comfortable! you understand, Madame Georges! it is underlined!" said Madame Dubreuil, looking at her friend with an air at once embarrassed and meditative; then she continued:—"Make a fire night and day in the pavillion, to drive away the dampness, for it is a long time since it has been occupied. You will treat the person who will come to stay here as you would treat me; a letter which this person will hand you, will inform you what I expect from your zeal, always so obliging. I count on you once more, without fear of your failing; I know how kind you are, and I know your fidelity. Adieu, my dear Madame Dubreuil. Embrace my pretty god-daughter, and believe in my affectionate regard.

"NOIRMONT DE LUCENAY."

P.S.—The person who is to occupy the pavillion will arrive the day after to-morrow, in the evening. Above all, do not forget, I beg you, to make the pavillion as *comfortable* as possible."

"Do you see, again, this devil of a word underscored?" said Madame Dubreuil, putting in her pocket the letter of the Duchess de Lucenay. "Well; nothing can be plainer," answered Madame Georges.

"How, nothing plainer?" "You have not understood, then? The Duchess wishes, above all, that the pavillion shall be as *comfortable* as possible." "It was for this that I have sent for you. Clara and I have almost killed ourselves in thinking what this word meant, and we can't find it out. Yes, Clara has been to

boarding-school at Villiers le Bel, and has gained I don't know how many prizes in geography and history. Well! what use is it? she is no farther advanced than I am on the subject of this odd word; it must be some word used at court or in the fashionable world. But, never mind, you can easily imagine our embarrassment: the Duchess wishes, above all, that the pavilion should be comfortable; she underlines the word, she repeats it twice, and we can't find out what she means." "Thank God! I can explain to you this great mystery," said Madame Georges, smiling. "*Comfortable*, on this occasion, means a commodious room, well arranged, well enclosed, warm; in short, where nothing is wanted that is necessary, and even superfluous."

"Ah, My God! I understand, but, then, I am much embarrassed." "How is that?"

"The Duchess speaks of carpets, furniture, and many other things; but we have no carpets here, our furniture is very common; and, besides, I do not know whether the person we expect is a lady or gentleman; and all this must be ready by to-morrow night. What shall I do? here there are no resources. Truly, Madame Georges, it almost drives me wild."

"But, mamma," said Clara, "if you take the furniture of my chamber, while you are getting new furniture, I will go and pass two or three days with Marie, at Bouqueval?" "Your chamber, my child; do you think it is good enough?" said Madame Dubreuil, shrugging her shoulders; is it enough—enough *comfortable!* as the Duchess says. My God! where do they find such words?"

"This pavilion is then, ordinarily uninhabited?" asked Madame Georges. "Without doubt, it is the little white building which stands all alone at the end of the orchard. The prince built it for the duchess when she was a child: when she came to the farm with her father, she always rested there. It has three pretty rooms, and at the end of the garden a Swiss dairy, where the Duchess amused herself to play milkwoman: since her marriage, we have seen her at the farm but twice, and each time she passed some hours in the little pavilion. The first time—it is about six years ago—she came on horseback with—"

Then, as if the presence of Fleur de Marie and Clara hindered her from saying any more, Madame Dubreuil said,

"But I talk; yet all this does not relieve me from my

troubles. Come, then, to my assistance, my dear Madame Georges."

"Let me see, now, what there is in the pavilion at present." "Not much; in the principal room—a straw mat on the floor, a rush-bottomed sofa, arm-chairs of the same, a table, some chairs, and that's all. From this to being *comfortable* there is a long distance, you see." "Were I in your place, this is what I would do: it is eleven o'clock; I would send to Paris an intelligent man."

"Our superintendant; he has no superior."

"Very well; in two hours, at the farthest, he can be in Paris: he must go to an upholsterer in the Chaussée d'Antin—no matter whom; he will give him a list that I will make for you, after having seen the pavilion, and he will say that, cost what it may—" "Oh! certainly; as long as the duchess is content, I shall regard nothing." "He will say to him, then, that, cost what it may, all that is noted on this list must be here this night, and, also, three or four workmen to arrange every thing."

"They can come by the Gonesse coach, which leaves Paris at eight o'clock in the evening." "And as there is nothing to do but to transport furniture, nail down carpets, and hang curtains, all can be easily ready by to-morrow evening."

"Ah! my good Madame Georges, from what embarrassment you save me. I should never have thought of this. You are my providence: and now you will have the goodness to make me the list I want, so that the pavilion shall be—"

"Comfortable?" "Yes, certainly."

"Ah! my God; another difficulty; we don't know whether it is a gentleman or a lady we are to expect. In her letter, the duchess said a person: it is very perplexing."

"Act as if you expected a lady, my dear Madame Dubreuil; if it is a man, he will like it all the better." "You are right; always right." A servant came and announced that the breakfast was ready. "We will breakfast directly," said Madame Georges; but, while I write the list of what is necessary, have the three rooms measured—the height, length, and breadth—for the curtains and carpets." "Well, well; I'll go and tell all this to the superintendant."

"Madame," said the servant, "there is also there this milk-woman of Stains; her furniture is in a little cart drawn by an ass." "Marry, her furniture is not very heavy."

"Poor woman," said Madame Dubreuil, with interest.

"Who is this woman?" asked Madame Georges.

"A peasant of Stains, who had four cows, and who made her living by selling milk every morning in Paris. Her husband was a farrier. One day, having need of some iron, he accompanied his wife, agreeing to meet her on his return home at the corner of the street where she usually sold her milk. Unfortunately, this was in a horrible part of the city: when her husband returned, he found her quarrelling with some drunken wretches who had overturned her milk into the gutter. The blacksmith tried to make them understand reason; they maltreated him; he defended himself, and in the scuffle he received a blow with a knife, which stretched him dead on the ground." "Ah! how dreadful," cried Madame Georges; "and did they arrest the assassin?"

"Unfortunately, no; in the tumult he escaped. The poor widow assures me that she can easily recognize him, for she has seen him several times with some of his comrades in that part of the town; but so far all researches have been useless to discover the assassin. In short, since the death of her husband she has been obliged to sell her cows, and a little land that she had to pay her debts. The farmer of the chateau of Stains recommended her to me as an excellent creature, as honest as unfortunate; for she has three children, the eldest of which is not more than twelve years old; I happened to have a place vacant; I have given it to her, and she has now come to remain with us." "This goodness on your part does not suprise me, my good Madame Dubreuil." "Tell me, Clara," continued she, "do you wish to go and show this good woman her room, while I go and tell the superintendant to get ready to go to Paris?" "Yes mamma; Marie, come with me." "Doubtless; could one go without the other?" "And I," added Madame Georges, seating herself before a table, "I'll commence my list, so as not to lose any time, for we must be back at Bouqueval by four o'clock."

"At four o'clock; you are in a great hurry," said Madame Dubreuil. "Yes, Marie must be at the parsonage by five o'clock." "Oh! if it is an engagement with our good Abbé Laporte, it is sacred," said Madame Dubreuil. "I will write the orders in consequence—these two children have so much to say—we must give them time to talk." "We will go, then, at three o'clock, my dear Madame Dubreuil."

"It is understood. But I must thank you once more; what a happy idea it was to send for you," said Madame Dubreuil. "Go, Clara; go, Marie!" While Madame Georges wrote, Madame Dubreuil went in one direction, and the two young girls another with the servant who had announced the milk-woman from Stains. "Where is this poor woman?" asked Clara. "She is with her children, her little cart and donkey, in the barn yard, mademoiselle."

"You shall see her, Marie," said Clara, taking her arm; how pale she is, how sad she looks in her widow's mourning. The last time she came to mamma she quite overcame me; she wept bitterly in speaking of her husband; and then, suddenly drying her tears, she burst out in a rage against his murderer. Then—she made me afraid, she looked so wicked; but, truly, her feelings are natural! How many unfortunate people there are; eh, Marie?"

"Yes, yes; unquestionably," answered she sighing, "there are many unhappy people; you are right, Mademoiselle."

"Come, come!" cried Clara, stamping her feet; "now see, once more you have said *you*; (*thou* is always used among intimate friends) and you call me Mademoiselle. Are you angry with me, Marie? "I, oh no!" "Well, then, why do you say *you?* You know my mother and Madame Georges have already scolded you for that. I warn you, I'll make them scold you still more; so much the worse for you!" "Clara, pardon me; I was not thinking."

"Not thinking—when you see me after eight days' separation!" said Clara, sadly. "No, no, it is not that: look here, Marie— I shall begin to think you are proud."

Fleur de Marie became pale as death, and answered not a word. At the sight of her, a woman dressed as a widow had uttered a cry of horror and anger.

This woman was the person who each morning had sold milk to Marie when she lived with the Ogresse of the tapis-franc.

CHAPTER XII.

THE MILKWOMAN.

THE scene which we are about to describe took place in one corner of the courts of the farm, in presence of the labourers and women,

who had just returned from work to take their mid-day repast.

Under a shed was to be seen a little cart drawn by an ass, and containing the rustic furniture of the widow; a little boy about twelve years of age, aided by two children still younger, had commenced to unload this vehicle. The milkwoman was about forty years of age, with a rough, hard-visaged countenance, whose eyes were red from recent weeping. On perceiving Fleur de Marie, at first she uttered a piercing scream; but soon grief, anger, indignation contracted her features; she threw herself on the poor girl, took her brutally by the arm, and, shewing her to the people of the farm, cried, "Here is a wretch who knows the assassin of my husband. I have seen her speak twenty times to this brigand! When I sold milk at the corner of the Rue de la Vieille Draperie, she came to buy a sou's worth every morning; she ought to know who the scoundrel is who gave the blow: like all her fellows, she belongs to this clique of bandits. Oh! you shall not escape me, hussey as you are!" cried the exasperated milkwoman, and she seized the other arm of Fleur de Marie, who, trembling, lost, wished to fly. Clara, stupified at this sudden attack, had not been able to say a word; but, at this renewed violence, she cried, "but are you mad! grief has taken away your senses! you are mistaken." "I mistaken!" answered the woman, bitterly. "Oh, no, no! I am not mistaken. Look, look! how pale she is—the wretch! how her teeth chatter. Justice shall force her to speak; you shall come with me to the mayor, do you hear? Oh! you need not resist. I will hold you—I will carry you sooner!" "Insolent that you are;" cried Clara, much exasperated; "go away from here—to treat my friend thus—my sister!" "Your sister—mademoiselle, go away! it is you who are mad!" answered the widow, roughly: "your sister! a girl from the streets, who for six months I have seen in the cité." At these words the labourers began to murmur against Fleur de Marie; they naturally took the part of the milkwoman, who was of their class, and whose misfortunes interested them.

The three children, hearing their mother raise her voice, ran to her and clung round her weeping, without knowing what was the matter. The appearance of these poor little things, also dressed in mourning, increased the sympathy that the widow inspired, and augmented the indignation of the peasants against Fleur de Marie.

Clara, frightened at these almost menacing demonstrations,

said to the people of the farm, in a trembling voice, "Make this woman go away from here; I repeat to you that sorrow makes her crazy. My God! this mad woman knows not what she says." Marie, pale, trembling, with her head down to escape all looks, remained silent, annihilated, helpless, and made no movement to escape from the rough grasp of the milkwoman. Clara, attributing this to the fright caused by this scene, said again to the labourers, "Do you hear me, then? I order you to drive this woman away. Since she persists in her conduct, to punish her insolence, she shall not have the place my mother promised her; she shall never put her foot on this farm again." Not a single labourer moved to obey the orders of Clara; one of them dared to say:—

"Marry, Mademoiselle, if this is a girl of the streets, and she knows the assassin of the husband of this poor woman, she will come and explain before the mayor." "I repeat that you shall never come here again," said Clara to the milkwoman, "unless you instantly ask pardon of Mlle. Marie for your rudeness." You drive me away, Mademoiselle! very well," answered the widow, with bitterness. "Come, my poor orphans," added she, embracing her children, "load the cart again; we will go and seek our bread elsewhere, the allwise God will have pity on us; but at least, in going, we will take with us this creature before the mayor, who will oblige her to denounce the assassin of my husband, since she knows the whole band. Because you are rich, Mademoiselle," continued she, looking at Clara insolently, "because you have friends among such creatures as this, you must not, on that account, be so hard to poor folks."

"It is true," said a labourer, "the milkwoman is right."

"Poor woman, she has right on her side."

"Some one has killed her husband; must she remain silent?

"It is unjust to send her away. Is it her fault if the friend of Mlle. Clara, turns out to be a girl of the streets?"

"An honest woman should not be turned away—a mother of a family, on account of such a creature."

And the murmurings became menacing, when Clara cried, "God be praised! here is my mother."

Madame Dubreuil, returning from the pavilion in the orchard, crossed the court. "Well, Clara, well, Marie," said she, approaching the group: "come to breakfast; come, my children, it is already late." "Mamma," cried Clara, "defend

my sister from the insults of this woman," and she pointed to the widow; "pray send her away. If you knew what she has had the impudence to say to Marie."

"How? she has dared?" "Yes, mamma. Look, poor little sister, how she trembles; she can hardly support herself. Ah! it is a shame for us, that such a scene should take place here. Marie, pardon us, I intreat you!"

"But what does this mean?" asked Madame Dubreuil, looking around her with a troubled air, after having remarked the appearance of Marie. "Madame will be just, she will, we are very sure," murmured the labourers.

"Ah! here is Madame Dubreuil; it is you who will be turned out," said the widow to Fleur de Marie.

"It is then true!" cried Madame Dubreuil to the milkwoman, who still held Fleur de Marie by the arm; "you dare thus to speak to the friend of my daughter? Is it thus you return my kindness? will you leave this young person alone?"

"I respect you, madame, and I am grateful for your kindness," said the widow, relinquishing the arm of Marie; "but before you accuse me and drive me away with my children, question this girl. She will not have the effrontery to deny that I know her, and that she knows me also." "My God! Marie, do you hear what this woman says?" cried Madame Dubreuil, with surprise.

"Are you called, yes or no, the Goualeuse?" said the milkwoman to Marie. "Yes," said the unfortunate girl, in a low voice and cast-down manner, and without looking at Madame Dubreuil. "Yes; they called me thus." "Ah! do you see!" cried the provoked labourers; "she acknowledges it!" "What does she acknowledge?" cried Madame Dubreuil, half frightened at the avowal of Fleur de Marie. "Let her answer, Madame," said the widow. "She will confess that she was in an infamous house of the Rue aux Fêves, in the cité, where I sold her a sou's worth of milk every morning. She will confess that she has often spoken before me to the assassin of my husband. Oh! she knows him well, I am sure. A pale young man, who was always smoking, and who wore a cap, a blouse, and had long hair; she must know his name. Is it not true? Answer, wretch!" cried the milkwoman. "I may have spoken to the assassin of your husband; for there is unfortunately, more than

one murderer in the cité," said Fleur de Marie, in a voice almost extinct; "but I do not know of whom you speak." "How! what does she say?" cried Madame Dubreuil with affright; "she has spoken to assassins." "Creatures such as she is, only know such kind of people," answered the widow.

At first, stupefied by such a strange relation, confirmed by the last words of Fleur de Marie, Madame Dubreuil, comprehending then every thing, drew back with disgust and horror, drawing violently and roughly her daughter towards her, who had approached Marie to sustain her, and cried,

"Ah! what abomination. Clara, take care. Do not approach this person. But how could Madame Georges receive her at her house? How did she dare to present her to me, and suffer my daughter—my God! but this is horrible. But no, Madame Georges is incapable of such indignity. She has been deceived, as we have been. If not, this is abominable on her part." Clara, much afflicted at this cruel scene, believed herself in a dream. In youthful innocence, she did not comprehend the terrible criminations with which they loaded her friend. Her heart was broken, tears filled her eyes, on seeing the stupor of Marie, dumb, trembling as a criminal before her judges. "Come, come, my daughter," said Madame Dubreuil to Clara; then turning towards Fleur de Marie, "And you, unworthy creature, the great God will punish you for your hypocrisy. To dare to suffer that my daughter—an angel of virtue—should call you her friend—her sister! you, the refuse of what is most vile in the world: what effrontery. To dare to associate with honest people, when you deserve, without doubt, to join your fellows in prison." "Yes, yes," cried the labourers, "she must go to prison. She knows the assassin. She is perhaps his accomplice. "Do you see the hand of heaven?" said the widow, shaking her fist at Marie. "As to you, my good woman," said Madame Dubreuil, "far from sending you away, I will reward the service you have rendered me in unmasking this creature."

"Right! our mistress is just," shouted the labourers.

"Come, Clara," continued she, "Madame Georges must explain her conduct to us, or I will never see her again; for if she has not been deceived, her conduct towards us has been scandalous." "But, my mother, see this poor Marie." "Let her sink with shame, if she pleases; so much the better. Despise

her. I do not wish you to remain a moment with her. She is one of those creatures to whom a young girl like you cannot speak without dishonouring herself." "My God! mamma," said Clara, resisting the efforts of her mother to carry her off, "I do not know what all this means. Marie is perhaps culpable, since you say so; but see, see—she is fainting; have pity on her, at least." "Oh! Mademoiselle Clara, you are good—you pardon me. It is, indeed, unwillingly that I have deceived you. I have often reproached myself," said Fleur de Marie, casting on her protectress a look of ineffable gratitude. "But, my mother, have you then no pity?" cried Clara, in a touching voice. "Pity! for her? Come, if it were not for Madame Georges, who will take her away, I would turn this wretch out of doors as a pest," and she endeavoured to lead off her daughter, who, turning towards her, cried, "Marie, my sister! I do not know of what they accuse you, but I am sure you are not culpable, and I love you always." "Hush, hush," said Madame Dubreuil, putting her hand over the mouth of her daughter, "hush; happily, every one present can bear witness, that after this odious revelation, you have not remained a moment with this lost girl. Is it not so, my friends?" "Yes, yes, madame," said a labourer, "we are witnessess that Mademoiselle Clara has not remained a moment with this girl, who is doubtless a thief, since she knows assassins."

Madame Dubreuil carried off Clara. Marie remained alone in the midst of the menacing group which was formed around her. Notwithstanding the reproaches with which Madame Dubreuil had overwhelmed her, her presence and that of her daughter had, in some degree, supported Fleur de Marie as to the consequences of this scene; but, after the departure of the two women, finding herself at the mercy of the peasants, her strength failed her, and she was obliged to lean against the fence for support. Nothing could be more touching than the position of this unfortunate. Nothing more threatening than the words, the attitude of the peasants who surrounded her. With her head hanging down, her face concealed in her two hands, her neck and bosom veiled by the square ends of the red Indian kerchief which was tied round her little peasant's cap, immovable, she presented the most touching picture of grief and resignation. At some distance from her, the widow of the murdered man,

triumphant and still exasperated against Fleur de Marie, pointed to her with gestures of hatred and contempt. The people of the farm, grouped around, did not conceal the hostile sentiments which animated them; their rough and gross countenances expressed, at once, indignation, anger, and a sort of brutal and insulting raillery; the women showed themselves the most furious, the most revolting. The touching beauty of the poor girl was not one of the least causes of the hatred against her.

Man nor woman could not forgive Fleur de Marie for having been, until then, treated as an equal by their masters.

And, besides, some of the labourers of Arnouville, having been unsuccessful applicants for situations at the farm of Bouqueval, felt towards Madame Georges rather unfriendly, a feeling which could be of no advantage to her protégée. The first movements of uneducated natures are always extreme — excellent or detestable.

But they become horribly dangerous when the multitude believe their brutalities authorized by the real or imaginary wrongs of those who act from motives of rage or hatred.

"We must carry her before the mayor," cried one.

"Yes, yes; and if she can't walk we'll push her."

"And to think that she dares to dress like one of us honest country-girls," added one of the ugliest women of the farm.

"With her holy touch-me-not air," answered another, "one would have given her the sacrament without confession."

"Has she had the impudence to go to the mass?"

"The brazen face! why did she not take communion at once?"

"And she must associate with our masters, that's more."

"As if we were not good enough for her!"

"Happily, every one has their turn."

"Oh! you must speak and say who is the murderer," cried the widow. "You belong to the same band. I am not sure I did not see you that very day. Come, come; you need not sob, now you are known. Show us your face; it is fine to look at." And the widow brutally tore down the hands of the young girl, which concealed her face bathed in tears. Marie, at first overcome with shame, began to tremble with affright on finding herself at the mercy of the enraged beings; she joined her hands, turned towards the milkwoman her supplicating and tearful eyes,

and said, in her sweet voice, "My God! madame, it is two months since I retired to the farm of Bouqueval. I was not then a witness of the misfortune of which you speak; and—" The timid voice of Fleur de Marie was drowned with threatening cries. "Lead her to the mayor—let her explain."

"Come, march! my beauty."

And the manacing group drew nearer and nearer; she crossed her hands, and, looking from side to side, seemed to implore assistance.

"Oh," said the widow, "you need not look for help; Mademoiselle Clara is no longer there to defend you; you shall not escape us. "Alas, madame," said she trembling, "I do not wish to escape, I only ask to answer what is demanded, since it may be of use to you. But what harm have I done to all these people who surround and threaten me."

"You have had the impudence to associate with our masters, when we, who are a thousand times better than you, could not do it. That's what you have done for us."

"And, besides, why did you wish to drive away from here this poor widow and her children?" said another. "It was not I, it was Mademoiselle Clara, who wished—" "Come, come, then," said another labourer, interrupting her, "you did'nt even ask pardon for her; you were willing to see her bread taken away!" "No, no: she did'nt ask pardon for them." "An't she wicked?" "A poor widow—mother of three children." "If I did not ask her pardon," said Fleur de Marie, "it was because I had not strength to say a word." "You had strength enough to speak to assassins."

Thus, as it always happens in popular movements, these peasants, more stupid than wicked, irritated, excited themselves at the sound of their own words, stirred themselves up merely from their own threats and revilings, against their victim. Thus the mob hastens, often by a progressive advancement, to the accomplishment of the most ferocious and unjust acts. The threatening circle of peasants drew nearer and nearer to Fleur de Marie—all speaking at once—the widow of the blacksmith was forgotten. Only separated from the horsepond by the slight fence against which she was leaning, Marie was afraid of being thrown into the water, and cried, stretching forth her hands in a supplicating manner, "But, my God! what do you wish of me! for pity's sake, do me no harm."

And as the milkwoman, with threatening gestures, drawing nearer and nearer, planted her fists directly in her face, Fleur de Marie cried, with affright, "I beg you, Madame, do not push me so, or I'll fall into the water," These words of Fleur de Marie gave these rough people an idea of one of those jokes, which often leave the victim half dead on the spot: one of the most furious cried, "A ducking! let us give her a ducking."

"Yes, yes—to the water!" was repeated with a burst of laughter and frantic applause. "That's it—a good ducking! it won't kill her." "That will teach her to come and mix with honest people." "Yes, yes—to the water." "The ice has been broken this morning on purpose." "The street-walker shall remember the good people of the farm of Arnouville."

On hearing these inhuman cries, these barbarous jokes, seeing the exasperation of these irritated people as they advanced to seize her, Fleur de Marie thought she would have died. After the first fear succeeded a sort of bitter content: she saw the future under such black colours, that she mentally thanked Heaven for putting an end to her troubles: she did not utter another word of complaint; but falling on her knees, crossed her arms religiously on her breast, shut her eyes, and in prayer, awaited the result.

The labourers, surprised at her attitude and silent resignation; hesitated for a moment, to accomplish their savage projects; but upbraided for their weakness by the female portion of the assemblage, they began to shout to give them courage to achieve their wicked design. Two of the most outrageous were about seizing her, when a trembling, thrilling voice, cried,

"Stop!" at the same moment, Madame Georges, who had forced a passage through the midst of the crowd, stood alongside of Marie, took her in her arms and raised her up, saying, "Stand up my child; stand up, my dear daughter; one must kneel to God alone." The expression, the attitude of Madame Georges was so proudly courageous, that the crowd drew back, and remained silent. Indignation coloured her cheeks, ordinarily so pale. She looked at the labourers boldly, and said to them, with a loud and threatening voice, "Wretches! are you not ashamed to treat with such violence this unfortunate child?"

"She is a—" "She is my daughter" cried Madame Georges, interrupting the labourers. "The Abbé Laporte, whom every one blesses and venerates, loves her and protects her, and those

he esteems ought to be respected by the whole world." These simple words produced their effect. The abbé was, in the neighbourhood, regarded as a saint; many of the peasants were not ignorant of the interest he felt in the poor girl. Nevertheless, some murmurs were still heard: Madame Georges understood the reason, and cried,

"This unfortunate young girl, was she the vilest of creatures, was she abandoned by every body, your conduct towards her would not be less odious. What do you wish to punish her for? And, besides, with what right? Where is your authority? Your strength! Is it not cowardly, disgraceful, for men to take for their victim a young girl without defence? Come, Marie, come, my well-beloved child, let us return home; there, at least, you are known and appreciated." Madame Georges took the arm of Fleur de Marie; the labourers, ashamed of the brutality of their conduct, drew back respectfully. The widow alone advanced, and said resolutely," This girl shall not leave this place until she makes a deposition before the mayor, as to her knowledge of the assassin of my husband."

"My good friend," said Madame Georges, restraining herself, "my daughter has no depositions to make here: some other time, if justice finds it necessary to summon her as a witness, let it be done, and I will accompany her." "But madame I tell you—" Madame Georges interrupted the milkwoman, and answered her, severely, "The misfortune of which you are a victim can hardly excuse your conduct: some day you will regret the violence that you have so cruelly excited. Mademoiselle Marie lives with me at the farm of Bouqueval: inform the judge who has received your first declarations; we will await his orders."

The widow could make no reply to these wise words; she seated herself on the ground, and began to weep bitterly, embracing her children. Some moments after this scene, Pierre brought the cabriolet: Madame Georges, and Marie got into the carriage to return to Bouqueval. On passing before the house, Marie saw Clara: she was weeping, half concealed behind the curtain, but with her handkerchief she waved an adieu to Fleur de Marie.

CHAPTER XIII.

CONSOLATIONS.

"Ah! madame, what shame for me! what shame for you! said Fleur de Marie to her adopted mother, when she found herself alone with her in the little saloon of Bouqueval. "You are doubtless angry at Madame Dubreuil, and this on my account. Oh! my presentiments! God has thus punished me for having deceived this lady and her daughter. I am the subject of discord between you and your friend." "My friend is an excellent woman, my dear child, but a poor weak head. Besides, as she has a good heart, to-morrow she will regret, I am sure, her foolish conduct of to-day." "Alas! madame, do not believe I wish to justify her by accusing you; but your kindness for me has made you blind. Put yourself in the place of Madame Dubreuil—learn that the companion of your cherished daughter—was—what I was—say, can any one blame her maternal indignation?"

Madame Georges could not find a word to answer to this question of Fleur de Marie, who went on: "This scene which I have undergone, to morrow will be known to the whole country. It is not for myself that I feel; but who knows now if the reputation of Clara will not be for ever stained, because she called me her sister, friend. I should have followed my first resolution—to have resisted the feeling which drew me towards Mademoiselle Dubreuil—and, even at the risk of inspiring her with aversion, withdrawn from the friendship she offered me. But I have forgotten the distance that separated us. Thus, you see, I am punished, ah! cruelly punished, for I have perhaps, caused an irreparable wrong to this young person, so virtuous and so good."

"My dear child," said Madame Georges, after some moments' reflection, "you are wrong to reproach yourself so much; your past life has been culpable, but is it nothing, by your repentance, to have merited the protection of our venerable abbé? Is it not under his auspices, under mine, that you have been presented to Madame Dubreuil? Yourself alone inspired her with the attachment she has so liberally shown you! Did not she ask you herself to call Clara sister? And, besides, as I told her just now, for I ought not, and wish not to conceal anything from you, could I, certain as I was of your repentance, noise about the past, and thus render

your situation more painful? impossible! perhaps in making you despair, in delivering you to the scorn of people who, as unfortunate, as forsaken as you have been, would not like you, preserve the secret instinct of honour and virtue? The revelations of this woman are to be deplored—fatal; but should I, on foreseeing it, have sacrificed your future repose to an event almost improbable?"

"Ah! madame, that which proves how much my position is for ever false and miserable, is that from affection for me you have had reason to conceal the past, and that the mother of Clara had also reason to despise me, as everybody will despise me hereafter; for the scene at the farm of Arnouville, will be spread everywhere —everything will be known. Oh! I shall die with shame! I can never look at any one again." "Not even at me? Poor child!" said Madame Georges, bathed in tears, and opening her arms to Fleur de Marie: "and yet you will move in my heart but the tenderness, the devotion of a mother. Courage, then, Marie; have the consciousness of your repentance. You are here surrounded with friends; well, this house shall be the world for you; we will meet these revelations you fear so much. Our good Abbé will call together the people of the farm, who already love you so much; he will tell them the truth of the past. Believe me, my child, his word has such authority that this revelation will render you more interesting still." "I believe you, madame, and I will be resigned. Yesterday, in our conversation, the abbé spoke to me of sorrowful expiations; they have commenced—I ought not to be astonished. He told me, besides, that my sufferings would be some day counted for me. Sustained in these trials by you and by him, I will not complain." "You will go to see him in a few moments; never will his counsels be more needed or salutary. It is now half past four: get ready to go to the parsonage, my child. I am going to write to Mr. Rodolphe what has occured at Arnouville. I will send my letter by express; then I will join you at the abbé's, for it is important that we should confer together."

A few moments afterward Marie set out for the parsonage by the hollow road, where, the evening previous, the Brigand and Tortillard had agreed to join La Chouette.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE MEETING.

The sun was sinking in the west, the plain was silent, deserted. Fleur de Marie approached the entrance of the hollow road, which must be crossed before she could reach the parsonage, when she saw a little lame boy, with a blue cap, come out of the ravine; he seemed to be weeping, and as he perceived her in the distance, he ran towards her. "Oh! my good lady have pity on me if you please," cried he, joining his hands in a supplicating manner. "What do you want? what is the matter, my child?" asked Marie with interest. "Alas, my good lady, my poor grandmother, who is very old, has fallen there, in descending the ravine; she has hurt herself very much. I am afraid she has broken her leg. I am too weak to help her up. My God! what shall I do if you don't come and help me? Poor grandmother! perhaps she will die." Marie, touched with the grief of the little lame boy, cried, "I am not very strong, either, my child, but I can, perhaps, help you to assist your grandmother. Let us go quickly to her. I live at the farm yonder. If the poor old woman can't walk there with us, I will send for—"

"Oh! my good lady, God will bless you, surely. It is this way —two steps—in the hollow road. As I said it is in going down the bank she has fallen." "You don't belong, then, to this part of the country?" asked Marie, following Tortillard, whom the reader has doubtless recognised. "No, my good lady, we come from Ecouen." "And where are you going to?" "To a good priest, who lives on the hill, there," said the son of Bras-Rouge, to augment the confidence of Marie.

"To the Abbé Laporte's, perhaps?" "Yes, my good lady; my poor grandmother knows him very well."

"I am just going to see him," said Fleur de Marie, going down lower and lower into thé hollow road.

"Grandmother! here I am, here I am! be patient. I bring you some help," cried Tortillard, to inform the Brigand and La Chouette to hold themselves in readiness to seize their victim. "Your grandmother has not fallen thus far from here?" asked Marie. No, my good lady; behind that large tree, where the road turns, at twenty steps from here." All at once, Tortillard stopped. The noise of the gallop of a horse resounded quite near

"Once more all is lost!" said Tortillard to himself. The road made a turn at a short distance from the place where he was standing with Marie. A horseman appeared at this turn; when he came up to them he stopped. Then was heard the trot of another horse, and some moments after came a servant dressed in a brown riding-coat, with silver buttons, white leather breeches, and top boots. A narrow belt of yellow leather confined behind his saddle the mackintosh of his master.

The master, dressed plainly, in a thick, bronze-coloured riding-coat and light grey trowsers, rode with perfect grace, a bay horse, of pure blood and singular beauty. The horse of the groom who stood in waiting at some steps from his master, was also of full blood and breeding. In this horseman, with a dark and charming face, Tortillard recognised Viscount Saint Remy, who was generally reputed to be the lover of the Duchess de Lucenay. "My pretty girl," said the Viscount to Marie, whose beauty struck him, "will you have the kindness to show me the road to the village of Arnouville?"

Marie, casting down her eyes before the bold stare of the eyes of the young man, answered, "As you go out of the hollow road, you will take the first path to the right; this will conduct you to an avenue of cherry-trees, which leads directly to Arnouville." "A thousand thanks, my pretty child. You direct me much better than an old woman, two steps from here, stretched at the foot of a tree; I could get nothing from her but groans." "My poor grandmother," murmured Tortillard, in a sorrowful tone. "And now, another word," added the viscount, addressing Marie; "can you tell me if I can easily find at Arnouville the farm of Mr. Dubreuil?"

Marie could not prevent herself from trembling at these words, which recalled to her the painful scene of the morning; she answered, "The farm buildings border on the avenue that you must follow in going to Arnouville."

"Once more, I thank you, my pretty child," said the viscount; and he set off on full gallop, followed by his groom.

The charming features of the viscount were somewhat relaxed during the time he spoke to Fleur de Marie; but as soon as he was alone, they became contracted, from some deep and profound anxiety.

Fleur de Marie, recalling to her mind the unknown for whom

the pavilion at Arnouville had been furnished in such haste, doubted not but that it was for this person. The gallop of the horses shook for some time the hard, frozen ground; the noise became less; it ceased. Tortillard breathed again. Wishing to notify and prepare his accomplices, he cried, "Grandmother, here I am, with a good lady, who comes to your assistance!" "Quick, quick, my child! this gentleman on horseback has made us lose time," said Marie, hastening her steps. Hardly had she reached the spot, when La Chouette whispered, "She is mine, Fourline." Then, springing at Marie, the Borgnesse seized her by the throat with one hand, while, with the other, she stopped her mouth. In the mean time, Tortillard threw himself at the feet of the young girl, which he clasped in his arms to prevent her moving. All this passed so rapidly, that La Chouette had not time to examine the features of La Goualeuse; but while the Brigand was creeping out of the hole where he had been concealed, the old woman recognised her former victim.

"Pegriotte!" cried she, at first stupified; then added, with savage joy! "it is then, you! Ah! it is the devil who sends you to me; it is your fate, then, always to fall under my claws! I have my vitriol in the carriage; this time your pretty mug sha'nt escape, for you make me sick with your virgin face. Take hold, my man! be careful she don't bite. Hold tight, while we bundle her up."

With two powerful hands the Brigand seized Marie, and before she could utter a cry, La Chouette threw the mantle over her head, and wrapped her up closely. In a moment Fleur de Marie, tied and gagged, was in no situation either to make a movement or to utter a cry for assistance.

"Now, you take charge of the bundle," said La Chouette. Eh! eh, it is not quite so heavy as the negro of a woman that was drowned in the canal of St. Martin: is it, my man?" And as the Brigand shuddered at these words, the Borgnesse continued: "Ah, now! what is the matter, Fourline? one would think you shivered? Since this morning, for instance, your teeth chatter as if you were looking for some one. "Old deceiver! he is looking at the flies," said Tortillard. "Come, quick, let us be off, my man: carry Pegriotte." "Very well," added La Chouette, seeing the Brigand take Fleur de Marie in his arms, like a sleeping child. "Quick to the carriage, quick."

"But who is going to lead me?" asked the brigand in a mournful voice, and clasping tightly in his arms his light and fragile burden. La Chouette, throwing off her shawl, untied a red handkerchief which covered her bony neck, twisted it, and said, "Open your muzzle; take the end of this in your jaws; bite hard. Tortillard shall take the other end in his hand; you will only have to follow him; a good blind man must have a good dog. Here!" The little cripple made a bound, imitated the barking and yelping of a dog, in a low tone, took the handkerchief in his hand, and thus conducted the brigand, while La Chouette hurried on to advise Barbillon. We have not attempted to describe the terror of Fleur de Marie when she found herself in the power of the brigand and La Chouette She felt her weakness, and made no resistance. Some moments afterward, she was placed in the carriage driven by Barbillon; although it was dark, yet the blinds were carefully drawn, and the three accomplices, with their almost expiring victim, were rapidly conveyed to the plain of St. Denis, where Tom awaited them.

THE MYSTERIES OF PARIS.

PART IV.

CHAPTER I.

CLEMENCE D'HARVILLE.

It will be recollected that the evening preceding the day on which the events that we have just related took place, Rodolphe had saved Madame d'Harville from an imminent danger, a danger created by the jealousy of Sarah, who had advised M. d'Harville of the meeting so imprudently granted by the marchioness to Mr. Charles Robert.

Rodolphe, quite overcome with this scene, had returned home after leaving the house in the Rue du Temple, putting off till the next day, the visit that he intended to make Mademoiselle Rigolette, and to the family of the unfortunate workman of whom we have spoken; for he believed them relieved from want by the money which he had transmitted to them by the marchioness, in order to render her pretended visit of charity more probable in the eyes of her husband. Unfortunately, Rodolphe knew not that Tortillard had stolen the purse, and the reader knows in what manner he committed this audacious robbery. Towards four o'clock the prince received the following letter. An old woman brought it, and went away without receiving any answer.

"My Lord, I owe you more than life; I will express to you, to-day, therefore, my profound gratitude. To-morrow, perhaps, shame will make me silent. If you could do me the honour to come to me to-night, you would finish this day as you have commenced it, by a generous action.

D'Orbigny d'Harville.

"P.S. Do not give yourself the trouble to answer, I shall be at home all the evening."

Rodolphe, happy at having rendered her an eminent service, nevertheless, regretted the kind of forced intimacy that this cir-

cumstance would thus suddenly establish between him and the marchioness. Incapable of betraying the friendship of d'Harville, but profoundly touched with the grace and attractive beauty of Clemence, Rodolphe had almost given up her society after a month's assiduities.

He also recalled with emotion, the conversation he had overheard at the embassy of * * * between Tom and Sarah.

Clemence d'Harville awaited also this interview with anxiety; the two predominating sentiments were confusion and shame when she thought of Rodolphe, and bitter aversion when she thought of Mr. Robert. This aversion, this hatred, was caused by many reasons. A woman will risk her honour, her reputation for a man; bnt she will never pardon him for having placed her in a humiliating or ridiculous position. Now Clemence, exposed as a butt to the sarcasms, the insulting looks of Madame Pipelet, had nearly died from shame. This was not all.

Receiving from Rodolphe a notice of the danger which she ran, Clemence had run quickly up to the fifth story; the direction of the stairs was such, that as she mounted, she perceived Mr. Robert clothed in his splendid robe de chambre, at the moment when, recognising the light step of the woman he expected, he opened the door with a smiling, confident, and all-conquering air. The insolent foppery of the significant costume of the commandant, taught the marchioness how grossly she had been deceived by this man. Led on by the goodness of her heart, by the generosity of her character, to a proceeding which could ruin her, she had granted him this meeting, not from love, but only from commiseration, that she might console him for the ridiculous part that the bad taste of the duke had made him play before her at the embassy of * * *

Seated in an arm chair, entirely covered with straw-coloured Indian stuff, as was the rest of the furniture, Clemence d'Harville, with her hair dressed plainly, wore a robe of black velvet, which displayed, to considerable advantage, the exquisite embroidery of her collar and sleeves, of English lace. As the time approached for her interview with Rodolphe, her emotion redoubled; however, her confusion gave place to the most resolute thoughts; after long reflection, she determined to confide to Rodolphe a great—a cruel secret, hoping that her extreme frank-

ness would conciliate, perhaps, an esteem of which she showed herself so jealous. Revived by gratitude, her first penchant for Rodolphe was awakened with renewed force. One of those presentiments, which rarely deceive a loving heart, told her that chance alone had not led the prince, at such a juncture, to save her; and that, in ceasing for some months to visit her, he had obeyed a sentiment very different from aversion. A vague apprehension raised also in the mind of Clemence doubts on the sincerity of Sarah's affection. At the end of a few minutes, a valet de chambre, after having discreetly knocked at the door, entered, and said, "Will your ladyship receive Madame Ashton and Mademoiselle?"

"Certainly; certainly," answered the marchioness. And her daughter, then, slowly entered the saloon.

She was a child of four years of age, who would have been charming if it had not been for her unhealthy looks and her extreme delicateness. Madame Ashton, her governess, held her by the hand; Claire, notwithstanding her feeble state, ran towards her mother, stretching out her arms.

"Poor little angel," said her mother, covering her child with kisses; she returned the caresses with infantine joy, when the valet de chambre opened the folding doors of the saloon, and announced "His Serene Highness, the Grand Duke of Gerolstein." Claire, mounted on the lap of her mother, had thrown her arms around her neck and embraced her closely. At the sight of Rodolphe, Clemence blushed, placed her child gently on the carpet, made a sign to Madame Ashton to take away her daughter, and stood up.

"You will permit me, Madame," said Rodolphe, smiling, after having respectfully saluted the marchioness, "to renew my acquaintance with my former little friend, who, I fear, has forgotten me; and stooping down, he held out his hand to Claire. She at first stared at him curiously with her two large black eyes; then recognizing him, she made a slight sign with her head, and threw him a kiss from the ends of her delicate fingers. "You know the prince, my child?" asked Clemence; she nodded her head affirmatively, and sent another kiss to Rodolphe. "Her health appears better than when I last saw her," said the prince to Clemence.

"My lord, she is a little better, yet still suffering."

The Marchioness and Rodolphe, equally embarrassed in thinking of the conversation that must ensue, were almost satisfied at seeing it retarded for a few moments by the presence of Claire; but the governess having discreetly led off the child, Rodolphe and Clemence found themselves alone.

CHAPTER II.

THE CONFESSION.

The chair of the marchioness was placed to the right of the chimney-piece, against which Rodolphe leaned lightly. Never had Clemence been more struck with the noble and gracious air of the prince; never had his voice seemed to her more sweet and animating.

Feeling how painful it must be to the marchioness to commence this conversation, Rodolphe said to her, "You have been, madame, the victim of a shameful treason: a scandalous accusation of the Countess Sarah M'Gregor had nearly caused your ruin."

"Can it be true! my lord?" cried Clemence. "My presentiments did not deceive me, then; and how did your highness discover it?"

"Yesterday, by chance, at the ball of the countess, I discovered their infamous designs. I was seated in a retired part of the winter garden. Ignorant that the mass of shrubbery separated me from them, which yet permitted me to hear their conversation, the Countess Sarah and her brother came to converse together of their projects, and of the snare they had laid for you. Wishing to inform you of the danger with which you were threatened, I went, in great haste, to the ball of Madame de Norval, thinking to find you. You had not appeared there. To write you this morning was to expose my letter to the chance of falling into the hands of the Marquis, whose suspicions were already awakened. I preferred to go and wait for you at the Rue du Temple, to baffle the schemes of the Countess Sarah. You will pardon me for conversing so long on a subject that must be disagreeable to you? Without the letter which you had the goodness to write me, never would I have spoken to you of all this." After a moment's silence, the marchioness replied,

"I have only one way, my lord, to prove to you my gratitude. It is to make an avowal to you that I have never yet made to any one. This avowal will not justify me in your eyes, but perhaps it will make you find my conduct less culpable."

"Frankly, madame," said Rodolphe, smiling, "my position towards you is very embarrassing."

Clemence, astonished at his remark, looked at Rodolphe with surprise.

"How, my lord?"

"Thanks to a circumstance that you will no doubt imagine. I am obliged to play the grandpapa, in relation to an adventure which, from the moment you escaped from the snare which the odious Countess laid for you, merits not to be thought of so seriously; but," added Rodolphe, with a slight shade more of gravity, "your husband is to me almost a brother; my father had vowed to his father the most affectionate gratitude. It is, then, very cordially that I felicitate you on having obtained for your husband repose and reliance." "And it is also that because you honour me with your friendship, my lord, that I beg to inform you of the whole truth, both on a choice which must seem to you as unfortunate, as it really is, and on my conduct, which offends him whom your highness almost calls his brother."

"I shall always be happy and proud of the smallest proof of your confidence. However, permit me to say, respecting the choice of which you speak, that I know you had as much regard to a feeling of compassion as to the entreaties of the countess M'Gregor, who had her reasons for wishing to ruin you. I know also that you hesitated a long time before you determined on a proceeding which you now so much regret."

Clemence looked at the prince with surprise.

"That astonishes you? I will tell you my secret some other time, so that you shall not think me a sorcerer," continued Rodolphe, smiling; "but your husband—is he completely reconciled?"

"Yes, my lord," said Clemence, casting down her eyes in confusion; "and I acknowledge to you, it impossible for me to hear him ask pardon for having suspected me, and to be so happy at my modest silence respecting my good works."

"He is happy in his illusions; do not distress yourself; keep him always, on the contrary, in his gentle error. If it was not

improper for me to speak lightly of this adventure, and if it were not concerning you, madame, I would say that a woman is never more charming to her husband than when she has something to conceal. When I was young," added Rodolphe, smiling, "I always felt, in spite of myself, a kind of vague indifference to any uncommon expressions of tenderness; and as on my own part I never felt more at ease than when I had done something that required to be pardoned, as soon as they showed themselves dissemblingly amiable as I wished myself to appear, I was certain that this charming harmony concealed a mutual infidelity."

Clemence was more and more surprised at hearing Rodolphe speak so lightly of an adventure which might have had for her such terrible consequences; but, soon thinking that the prince, by this affectation of levity, endeavoured to lessen the importance of the service he had rendered her, she said, deeply touched with this delicacy, "I comprehend your generosity, my lord. It is permitted you now to joke about the perils from which you have saved me. But that which I have now to say to you is so serious, so sad, it has so much to do with the events of the morning, your advice can be so useful to me, that I beg you to remember that you have saved my honour, my life—yes, my lord, my life. My husband was armed; he told me, in the excess of his acknowledgements, that he wished to kill me!"

"Great God! exclaimed Rodolphe, with lively emotion.

"It was his right," answered Clemence bitterly.

"I conjure you, madame," said Rodolphe, very seriously, "to believe me incapable of remaining indifferent to anything that interests you: if just now I joked, it is because I did not wish to add to your sorrows, which have caused you so much disturbance. Now, madame, I will seriously listen, since you do me the honour to say my counsels may be of service to you."

"Oh, of great service, my lord. But, before I ask them of you, permit me to say a few words of the past, of which you are innorant—of the years which preceded my marriage with d'Harville."

Rodolphe bowed; Clemence continued; "At sixteen I lost my mother," said she, unable to restrain a tear; "I will not tell you how much I adored her; imagine, the ideal of all earthly goodness; her tenderness for me was extreme; in this she found a a profound consolation for bitter griefs. Not fond of society, of delicate health, naturally very sedentary, her greatest pleasure,

was to charge herself with my education; for her solid and varied knowledge permitted her to fulfil better than any one the task she had assumed. Judge of her astonishment, of mine, when at sixteen years, at the moment when my education was almost finished, my father, making as a pretext the weak health of my mother, announced to us that a young widow, very much distinguished, whom great misfortunes had rendered very interesting, would finish what my mother had commenced. My mother refused at first to comply. I begged him not to place between us a stranger. He was inexorable, notwithstanding our tears. Madame Roland, widow of a colonel who died in the Indies, as she said, came to live with us, and was installed as my instructress."

"How! is it this Madame Roland whom your father married almost immediately after your marriage?" "Yes, my lord." "She was then very handsome?" "Passibly so, my lord." "Very intellectual then?" "Filled with dissimulation—cunning—nothing more: she was about twenty-five, very fair, and large blue eyes; her character perfidious even to cruelty."

"And her education?" "Absolutely neglected, and I cannot comprehend how my father, until then the very slave of appearances, had not thought that the incapacity of this woman would scandalously betray the true motive of her presence in his house. My mother observed to him, that Madame Roland was profoundly ignorant; he answered in a tone which admitted of no reply, 'That educated or not, this young and interesting widow should preserve in his house the position in which he had placed her.' From this moment my poor mother comprehended all, and was deeply affected—deploring less, I think, the infidelity of my father, than the troubles this aberration must produce, and which even I might find out."

"But, in fact, your father, it seems to me, made a bad calculation in introducing this woman into his house."

"Your astonishment would be much increased, if you knew that my father is one of the most precise and rigid men I ever knew. To have arrived at such an entire forgetfulness of all propriety, must have been owing to the excessive influence of Madame Roland; an influence so much the more certain, as she concealed it under the mask of a violent affection for him."

"How old was your father about this time?" "Sixty years."

"And he believed in the love of this young woman?"

"My father had been one of the most fashionable men of his day. Madame Roland, from instinct or from some advice—"

"From advice? And who could advise her?"

"I will tell you all directly. Supposing that a man of fashion, when he became old, takes so much the more to be flattered on his personal advantages, as these praises would recall the gay days of his youth: this woman, would you believe it? flattered my father on the grace and charms of his features; on his inimitable elegance of shape and figure: and he was sixty years old. Every one appreciated his fine mind; yet he fell blindly into this gross snare. Such has been—such is yet, I doubt not, the cause of the influence of this woman over him. Yet, notwithstanding my sad reflections, I cannot but smile in recollecting that, before my marriage, I have often heard it said and sustained by Madame Roland, that what she called real maturity, was the finest portion of human existance; this real maturity did not commence, in her opinion, until towards fifty-five or sixty years." "The age of your father?" "Yes, my lord. 'Then alone,' said Madame Roland, 'the mind and experience attain their greatest developement; then only a man eminently placed in the world enjoys all the consideration he can possibly attain; then alone the ensemble of his features, the fine grace of his manners, attain their perfection; the face offering, at this time of life, a rare and divine mixture of gracious serenity and calm gravity. Finally, a slight tinge of melancholy, caused by the deceptions which experience ever teaches, completed the irresistible charms of a real maturity —charms only to be appreciated,' added Madame Roland, 'by women of mind and judgment, who have the good taste to turn their backs on the puerility of the giddy men of forty, whose character offers no security, and whose features, of an insignificant juvenility, are not sufficiently poetized by that majesty of expression which reveals the profound knowledge of life.'"

Rodolphe could not help smiling at the ironical manner with which Clemence traced the portrait of her step-mother. "There is one thing that I never pardon in foolish, ridiculous people." said he to her.

"What is that, my lord?" "It is to be wicked—that prevents one from laughing at them at one's ease." "It is, perhaps, a calculation on their part," said Clemence.

"I believe it, and it is a pity; for example, if I could forget

that this Madame Roland necessarily has caused you much sorrow, I should be much amused at this invention of the *real maturity*, opposed to the lively follies of those conceited young puppies of forty, who, according to this woman, seem hardly to have thrown of their dress of pages, as our grandfathers would have said."

"My father is, at least, I believe, happy in the illusions with which, even now, my step-mother surrounds him. Thus, since my father is happy, I should not, perhaps, complain of Madame Roland; but her odious conduct towards my mother—the unfortunate part, that she has taken respecting my marriage, cause my aversion towards her," said Clemence, after a moment's hesitation.

Rodolphe regarded her with surprise.

"D'Harville is your friend, my lord," continued Clemence, in a firm tone. "I know the gravity of the words I have just uttered: directly you shall tell me if they are just. But I return to Madame Roland, installed as my instructoress, notwithstanding her acknowledged incapacity. My mother had, on this subject, a painful explanation with my father, and signified to him, that, wishing, at least, to protest against the intolerable position of this woman, henceforth she would not appear at the table if Madame Roland did not at once leave the house. My mother was sweetness, goodness itself; but she became of indomitable firmness, when her personal dignity was in question. My mother was inflexible—she kept her promise. From this moment we lived completely secluded in her apartment; my father, from that time, showed me as much coldness as he did to my mother, while Madame Roland did, almost openly, the honours of our house, yet still as my instructress."

"Your mother must have suffered much."

"More on my account than on her own; for she thought of the future. Her health, already very delicate, became still more feeble; fate willed it, that our family physician, Mr. Sorbier, died. My mother placed every confidence in him; she bitterly regretted him. Madame Roland had for physician and friend, an Italian doctor of great merit, as she said: my father, imposed upon, consulted him sometimes, was pleased with him, and proposed him to my mother, who took him, alas! and it was he who took charge of her during her last illness." At these words, the

eyes of Clemence became filled with tears. "I am ashamed to acknowledge this weakness, my lord," added she; but, for the very reason that this doctor had been recommended by Madame Roland, I felt an aversion for him, I saw, with a kind of fear, my mother grant him her confidence; yet, as regards science, Doctor Polidori—"

"What do you say, madame?" cried Rodolphe.

"What is the matter, my lord?" said Clemence, startled at the expression of Rodolphe.

"But no," said the prince to himself. "I am doubtless mistaken—this is five or six years ago—while they told me that Polidori has been in Paris, under a feigned name, for not more than two years. It is certainly he whom I saw yesterday—this quack Bradamanté—yet—two physicians of the same name: what a singular coincidence. Madame, a word about Polidori; what age was this Italian?" "About fifty, I should think." "And his face—his countenance?" "Wicked. I shall never forget his green eyes; his nose looked like the beak of an eagle."

"It is he. It is certainly he," cried Rodolphe.

"And do you think, madame, that Doctor Polidori dwelt in Paris?" asked Rodolphe.

"I do not know, my lord. About a year after the marriage of my father, he left Paris: one of my friends, whose physician this Italian was at this time, Madame de Lucenay—"

"The Duchess de Lucenay?" said Rodolphe.

"Yes, my lord. But why this surprise?"

"Allow me to be silent on this head. But at this time, what did Madame de Lucenay say about this man?"

"That she received from him often, since his departure from Paris, letters very amusing, descriptive of the countries he visited. Now, I remember, that about a month since, asking Madame de Lucenay if she still received news from Polidori, she answered with an embarrassed air, that for a long time she had not heard of him, and that many persons thought he was dead." "It is singular," said Rodolphe, remembering the visit of Madame de Lucenay to the quack Bradamanté.

"You know this man, then, my lord?"

"Yes, unfortunately for me. But, pray continue your story: I will tell you directly who is this Polidori." "How? this physician?" "Rather say this man, stained with the most odious

crimes." "Crimes!" replied Clemence with affright. "He has committed crimes—this man? the friend of Madame Roland, and the physician of my mother! My mother died under his hands after a few days' illness. Ah, my lord! you alarm me; you tell me too much or not enough."

"Without accusing this man of one crime the more—without accusing your step-mother of being an accomplice, I say that you ought to thank God, that your father, after his marriage with Madame Roland, had no need of the services of Polidori."

"Oh, My God!" said Clemence, in a touching accent. "My presentiments did not deceive me?"

"Your presentiments?"

"Yes; just now I spoke to you of the aversion I felt for this man, because he had been introduced to us by Madame Roland, I did not tell you all, my lord." "How?"

"I feared to accuse an innocent person; to listen too much to the bitterness of my sorrows. But I am going to tell you all. The illness of my mother lasted five days: I had always nursed her. One evening I went to breathe the fresh air on the terrace of our house: at the end of a quarter of an hour, I re-entered by a long obscure corridor. At the feeble gleam of light, which escaped from the door of the apartment of Madame Roland, I saw Polidori go out; this woman accompanied him. I was in the shade; they did not see me. Madame Roland said some words to him in a low voice that I could not hear; the physician answered in a louder tone these words, '*After to-morrow.*' And as Madame Roland spoke to him again, he answered in a singular tone, '*After to-morrow. I tell you, after to-morrow.*'" "What did these words signify?" "They signified, my lord, the evening of Wednesday. Polidori said, '*after to-morrow*'—the Friday my mother was dead."

"Oh! this is frightful." "When I reflected on these words, *after to-morrow*, which seemed to have predicted the death of my mother, I thought that Polidori, knowing, from his medical science, how long my mother had to live, had hastened to inform Madame Roland—this woman, who had so many reasons to be rejoiced at her death. But never would I have dared to suppose—oh! no, no; even at this hour, I cannot believe in such a crime." "Was Polidori the only physician who attended your unfortunate mother?"

"The evening previous to her death, he brought in consultation one of his associates. According to what my father told me afterward, this doctor found my mother in a very dangerous state. After this fatal event, I was taken to one of my old relations. She had tenderly loved my mother. Forgetting the reserve due to my age, she taught me how much reason I had to hate Madame Roland. She enlightened me as to the ambitious hopes this woman would thence entertain.

"This information overwhelmed me; I then comprehended all my mother must have suffered. When I saw my father, my heart was almost broken; he came to take me with him to Normandy; there we were to pass the time of our first mourning. During the journey he wept much, and said he had no one but me to aid to support this terrible blow. I answered that he alone also remained to me, since the loss of my adored mother. After some words on the embarrassment he should experience if at any time he might be obliged to be absent, he told me, as if it was the most natural thing in the world, that out of kindness for him and me, Madame Roland had consented to take charge of his house, and serve him as guide and friend.

"Astonishment, grief, and indignation, rendered me dumb. I wept in silence—my father asked me the cause of my tears. I replied, perhaps with too much bitterness, that I would never live in the same house with Madame Roland: for I despised this woman as much as I hated her on account of the grief she had caused my mother. He remained calm; combated what he called my childishness, and said to me, coldly, that his resolution was unconquerable, and that I should submit.

"I begged him to allow me to retire to the monastery, where I had some friends: I would remain there until he thought proper to marry me. He observed to me that the time was passed when people were married at the grate of a convent; that my readiness to leave him would affect him very much, if he did not see in my words an independence which he could excuse, though he thought it not very sensible, and which would necessarily calm down; then he kissed my forehead, and called me a little vixen.

"Alas! in effect, it was necessary to submit. Judge of my grief—to live every day with a woman whom I almost reproached as the cause of my mother's death. I foresaw the most cruel

scenes between my father and me, no consideration preventing me from showing my aversion to Madame Roland. It seemed to me that thus I avenged my mother, while the smallest word of affection said to this woman, would appear to me a sacrilege." "My God, how painful this existence must have been to you. I was far from thinking that you had already suffered so much, when I had the pleasure of seeing you oftener. Never did a word from you make me suspect—"

"Then, my lord, I had not to exculpate myself from an unpardonable weakness. If I speak to you so much at length on this part of my life, it is to make you understand in what a position I was placed when I married; and why notwithstanding a warning which ought to have enlightened me, I married d'Harville. On arriving at Aubiers (the name of my father's country-seat), the first person who came to meet us was Madame Roland. She had been there since the death of my mother. In spite of her humble manner, she cast a glance of triumphant joy, ill concealed. I shall never forget the look, at once ironical and wicked, she gave me on our arrival; she seemed to say, 'I am here at home, you are the stranger.' A new sorrow was reserved for me; either from want of discreet action or barefaced impudence, this woman occupied the apartments of my mother. In my indignation, I complained to my father of such proceedings; he answered me severely, that this should astonish me less, as it was necessary that I should habituate myself to consider and respect Madame Roland as a second mother. I told him this would be a profanation of the sacred name; and to his great indignation, I lost no occasion to show my aversion for Madame Roland; several times he reprimanded me before her. He reproached me for ingratitude, my coldness towards this angel of consolation that Heaven had sent us. 'I beg, my father,' said I, one day, 'speak for yourself.' He treated me cruelly. Madame Roland, in her honied tones, interceded for me with profound hypocrisy. 'Be indulgent to Clemence,' said she; 'the regrets with which the excellent person we mourn inspires her are so natural, so praiseworthy, that we must respect her grief, and pity her even in her anger.' 'Well!' said my father, pointing to Madame Roland with admiration, 'did you hear her! is she not too generous?' 'Oh, my father; madame hates me, and I hate her.' 'Ah! Clemence you give me much pain, but I pardon you,' said Madame Roland, lifting

her eyes towards heaven. 'My noble friend!' cried my father, in a faltering voice, 'calm yourself, I conjure you; for my sake have pity on a fool who needs it for despising you thus! Then turning on me his angry looks, 'Tremble,' cried he—'If you dare to outrage again this most charming woman—make your apologies to her this moment.' 'My mother sees and hears me; she will never pardon such an action,' said I to my father, and I went out, leaving him occupied in consoling Madame Roland, and drying her hypocritical tears. Pardon me, for dwelling on these incidents, but they alone can give you an idea of the life I then led."

"I can almost imagine myself present at scenes so sadly true. In how many families have they before occurred, and how many times will they be repeated? Nothing can be more vulgar, and yet nothing can be more cunning than the conduct of Madame Roland: but in what manner did he present her to the neighbourhood?" "As my instructress and his friend; and she was received as such. With the exception of some rare visits, caused by business, or some relations with the neighbourhood, we saw no one; my father, completely governed by his passion, left off, at the end of three months, his mourning, under the pretext that it affected him too much. His coolness towards me augmented daily; his indifference reached such a point, that he left me a liberty quite unusual for a young person of my age. I saw him at breakfast; he afterwards retired to his rooms with Madame Roland, who served him as secretary for his correspondence or business; then he went out with her in the carriage or on foot, and did not return until an hour before dinner. Madame Roland then dressed herself with great taste, and my father followed her example with an alacrity very singular at his age; sometimes, after dinner, he received those persons whom he was obliged to see; afterward he made a party at backgammon until ten o'clock with Madame Roland, then he offered her his arm to conduct her to the chamber of my mother, kissed her hand respectfully, and retired. As for me, I could dispose of my day as I pleased, ride on horseback, followed by a groom, or take long walks in the woods which surrounded the chateau, sometimes overwhelmed with sorrow, I did not appear at breakfast; my father gave himself no trouble even—" "What singular conduct! what abandonment!"

"Having several times met one of our neighbours in the woods

where I ordinarily rode, I gave up these excursions, and I entered the park no more." "But what was the conduct of this woman towards you when you were alone with her?"

"We both avoided as much as possible, these encounters. Once only, in making allusion to some hard words which I had addressed to her the evening previous, she said to me coldly, 'Take care; you wish to quarrel with me; you will be defeated.' 'Like my mother?' said I; it is a pity, madame that Mr. Polidori is not here to advise you what will happen—*after to-morrow.*' 'These words produced a great impression, which, however she soon overcame. Now that I know, thanks to you, my Lord, who this Dr. Polidori is, and of what he is capable, the kind of fright that Madame Roland showed on hearing me utter these mysterious words, would confirm, perhaps, horrible suspicions. But no, no; I do not wish to believe that. I should be too much alarmed to think that my father is at this moment almost at the mercy of my stepmother." "And what reply did she make when you uttered these words of Polidori?" "She blushed at first; then, overcoming her emotion, she asked me coolly what I meant. 'When you are alone, madame, interrogate yourself; you can answer.' A short time after this, a scene took place which decided my fate. Among a great number of family pictures, ornamenting a saloon where we assembled every evening, was the portrait of my mother. One day I found it gone. Two of our neighbours had dined, with us; one of them, Dorral, a notary, had always shown for my mother the most profound veneration. On arriving in the saloon, 'Where is the portrait of my mother?' said I to my father. 'The sight of this picture caused me too much sorrow,' he answered in an embarrassed manner, with a glance of his eyes directing me to the strangers who witnessed the scene. 'And where is the portrait now, my father?' Turning towards Madame Roland and interrogating her with a look and gesture of impatience, 'Where have they put the portrait?' he asked her. 'In the store-room,' she answered, casting at me a look of defiance, believing that the presence of our neighbours would prevent a reply. 'I conceive madame,' said I, coldly, 'that the sight of my mother must be disagreeable to you; but this is no reason why you should send to the garret the portrait of the woman who, when you were wretched, charitably allowed you to live in her house."

"Very well!" cried Rodolphe. "This cold disdain was most cutting." 'Mademoiselle!' cried my father. 'You will acknowledge, however,' said I, interrupting him, that a person who meanly insults the memory of a woman who gave her alms, merits but disdain and aversion.' My father for a moment was confounded; Madame Roland became purple with shame and rage; the neighbours, very much embarassed, cast down their eyes and remained silent. 'Mademoiselle!' continued my father, 'you forget that madame was the friend of your mother; you forget she has watched and still watches over your education with maternal solicitude. You forget, also, that I profess for her the most respectful esteem. And since you allow yourself such proceedings before these gentlemen, I will say to you, that the ungrateful and cowardly are those who, forgetting the most tender cares, dare to reproach a noble unfortunate who merits interest and respect.' 'I will not allow myself to discuss this question with you, my father,' said I, in a submissive tone. 'Perhaps, Mademoiselle, I shall be more fortunate!' cried Madame Roland, carried this time by anger beyond the bounds of her habitual prudence. 'Perhaps, you will do me the favour not to discuss,' continued she, 'but to avow that, far from owing the least gratitude to your mother, I have only the recollection of the coolness she always showed me; for it was much against her will that I have—' 'Ah! madame,' said I, interrupting her, 'out of respect to my father, and out of shame for yourself spare us these disgraceful revelations. You make me regret having exposed you to such humiliating confessions.' 'How! mademoiselle!' cried she, almost mad with rage; 'you dare to say—' 'I say, Madame,' continued I, once more interrupting her, 'I say that my mother, in deigning to permit you to live in her house instead of driving you out of it, as she had the right to do, ought to have convinced you, by her contempt, that her tolerance towards you was imposed.'" "Better and better;" cried Rodolphe; "it was a complete execution. And this woman?"

"Madame Roland, by a very vulgar but very convenient method, terminated this conversation; she cried 'My God!' and pretended a sudden illness. Thanks to this incident, the two witnesses of this scene went out under the pretext of seeking assistance; I imitated them while my father overwhelmed her with the most

anxious attentions. The next morning he came to me, and said, 'In order that for the future, scenes like those of yesterday shall not be repeated, I declare to you as soon as the time, my mourning has expired, I shall marry Madame Roland. You will henceforth have to treat her with the respect due to my wife. For private reasons, it is necessary that you should be married before me; the fortune of your mother, which is more than a million, is your dowry. From this day I shall actively employ myself to procure you a suitable marriage by accepting propositions that have already been made to me on this subject; the persistance with which you attack, in spite of my admonitions, a person who is so dear to me, shows me the strength of your attachment. Madame Roland despises these attacks; but I will not suffer that such conduct shall be renewed before strangers, in my own house. In future you will not enter or remain in the saloon, except when Madame Roland or myself are there alone.' After this last conversation, I lived still more isolated. I only saw my father at the hours of repast; was so sad, that I awaited with impatience the moment when my father would propose to me a match, which I intended to accept, no matter with whom. Madame Roland having refrained from speaking ill of my mother, revenged herself otherwise; to exasperate me, she made use of a thousand things that had belonged to her: her arm-chair, her tapestry-frame, the books of her private library, even to a screen that I had embroidered for her, on which was her cipher. This woman polluted everything." "Oh! I conceive the horror that these profanations must have caused you." "I had no one to whom I could confide my sorrows. Yet I received a proof of interest which touched me, and which ought to have enlightened me as to the future: since the day I had treated Madame Roland so harshly before two witnesses, I saw no one. One day, to my great surprise, Dorral, the notary of whom I have spoken, came to seek me in the park, where I walked daily. 'Mademoiselle!' said he, 'I am afraid that the count should see me; read this letter, and burn it afterwards; it contains something of importance to you.' And he disappeared.

"In this letter he told me that it was in agitation to marry me to the Marquis d'Harville; this seemed agreeable on all sides; I was assured of his good qualities; he was young, very rich, of a

fine mind, and agreeable person. And yet the families of two young persons, to whom he had been successively engaged, had suddenly broken the projected marriage. The notary could not tell me the reason of this rupture, but he believed it his duty to inform me of it. The two young persons spoken of were daughters, one of M. de Beauregard, peer of France, the other of Lord Bolton. Dorral confided all this to me, because my father, very impatient to conclude my marriage, appeared to attach no importance to these facts."

CHAPTER III.

CONTINUATION ON THE STORY.

"In effect," said Rodolphe, after some moments of reflection, "I remember now that your husband, in the interval of a year, communicated to me the two projected marriages, which, about to be concluded, had been broken off, as he wrote me, on some discussions of moment."

Clemence smiled bitterly, and answered:

"You will know the truth directly. After having read the letter of the old notary, I felt as much curiosity as inquietude. Who was d'Harville? My father had never spoken of him. Soon Madame Roland, to my great astonishment, set out for Paris. Her absence was to last eight days at farthest; yet my father showed much grief at this separation; his temper became more sour; his coldness towards me was redoubled. One day I asked him how he was: 'I am suffering, and it is your fault.' 'My fault, my father?' 'Certainly! You know how much I am habituated to the society of Madame Roland, yet this admirable woman whom you have outraged, makes this journey, which withdraws her from me, for your interest alone.' This *interest* of Madame Roland alarmed me; I had a vague suspicion that it regarded my marriage. I leave you to imagine the joy of my father at the return of my future stepmother. The next day he sent for me; he was alone with her. 'I have,' said he to me, 'for a long time thought of your establishment. Your mourning will be finished in a month. To-morrow the Marquis d'Harville will arrive here; a young man, very distinguished, very rich, and in every thing capable of securing your happiness. He has seen you in society; he ardently

desires this union; all the preliminaries are arranged. It will then absolutely depend on you, to be married within six weeks. If on the contrary, from a notion that I will not force you, you should refuse this offer almost unhoped for, I will marry, according to my intention, as soon as the time of my mourning is over. In this latter case, I must say to you, your presence in my house will only be agreeable if you promise to show to my wife the tenderness and respect she deserves.' 'I comprehend, my father. If I do not marry d'Harville, you will be married; and then for you and Madame, it would be no longer undesirable if I should retire to the monastery?' "Right!" answered he, coldly."

"Ah! it is no longer weakness, it is cruelty!" cried Rodolphe.

"Do you know, my lord, what has always prevented me from entertaining against my father any resentment? It is that a kind of foresight tells me that some day he will dearly pay for his blind passion for Madame Roland. But thank God! this day has not yet come."

"And did you say nothing to him of what the old notary had told you in his letter concerning d'Harville?"

"Yes, my lord. That very day I begged my father to grant me a private interview. 'I have no secrets from Madame Roland. You can speak before her,' he answered. I remained silent. He said severely: 'Once more I tell you I have no secrets from Madame Roland. Explain yourself, then, clearly.' 'If you will permit me, my father, I will wait until you are alone.' Madame Roland arose and went out. 'Now you are satisfied!' he said to me; well! speak.' 'I feel no reluctance for the union you propose to me, my father; only I have heard that d'Harville has twice been on the point of being married—' 'Well, well!' said he, interrupting me; I know it; These ruptures have taken place in consequence of some difficulties in the settlements—the conduct of d'Harville has been beyond censure. If you have no other objection than this, you may consider yourself married, happily married—for I only wish for your happiness."

"Doubtless Madame Roland was delighted at this union?"

"Delighted! Yes, my lord," said Clemence, bitterly; "Oh! much delighted, for this union was her work. She gave the first idea of it to my father. She knew the true reason of the rupture of the first two engagements of d'Harville—that was the cause of

her wishing me to espouse him." "But for what end?" She wished to avenge herself on me, in wedding me thus to a frightful lot." "But your father?"

"Deceived by Madame Roland, he believed that the reasons he had assigned were the real ones."

"What a horrible plot! But this mysterious reason?"

"I will tell you directly. M. d'Harville arrived at Aubiers; his manners, his conversation, his figure pleased me: he seemed kind, good, but slightly melancholy. I remarked in him a contrast which astonished, yet was agreeable to me; his mind was richly cultivated, his fortune enviable, his birth illustrious, and yet sometimes his countenance, ordinarily energetic and resolute, expressed a kind of timidity almost fearful—a dejection, a distrust of himself which touched me much. I liked to see him show so much kindness as he did to an old valet de chambre, who had been with him from his boyhood, and who alone waited on him. Some time after his arrival, d'Harville remained two days in his room. The old servant opposed it, pretending that his master's head was so much affected, that he could not see any one. When d'Harville made his appearance again, I found him very pale, very much changed. He seemed to be annoyed if any one spoke of his illness. As I became better acquainted with him, I discovered in him many agreeable qualities. He had so many reasons to be happy, that I gave him credit for moderation in his happiness. The time of our marriage concluded upon he anticipated the least of my wishes in our future projects. If I asked him the cause of his melancholy, he spoke to me of his father, his mother, who would have been proud to see him married according to his wishes and hopes. I should have had bad taste not to receive reasons so flattering to me. D'Harville imagined how I had lived until then with Madame Roland and my father, although the latter, pleased with my intended marriage, which advanced his own, showed me great affection. In several conversations, he made me feel, with much tact and reserve, that he loved me still more on account of my past sorrows. I thought I ought on this subject to inform him that my father proposed to marry again; and as I spoke to him of the change that this union would have on my fortune, he did not let me finish, and gave me proofs of the most noble disinterested-

ness: the families to whom he had been on the point of being allied must be very sordid, thought I then, to have had any difficulties with him."

"Just so I have ever found him," said Rodolphe; "filled with delicacy, affection, and generosity; but did you never speak to him of these engagements?" "I avow to you, my lord, that seeing him so devoted, so good, several times this question rose to my lips; but soon, from fear even of wounding this devotion, I did not dare to broach the subject. The nearer the day of our marriage approached, the more he spoke of his happiness. Yet two or three times I saw him overwhelmed with sadness; one day he cast his eyes upon me; I saw a tear; he seemed oppressed; one would have said that he wished to confide a secret to me. The recollection of the broken engagements came to my mind. I acknowledge I was afraid. I felt a presentiment that perhaps it was a question of the happiness of my whole life; but I was so situated at home that I surmounted my fears."

"The witnesses of d'Harville, the duke de Lucenay and Saint Remy, arrived at Aubiers some days before my marriage! my nearest relations were alone invited. We were to start for Paris immediately. I did not feel any love for d'Harville, but I was interested in him; his character inspired me with esteem. Except for the event which followed this fatal union, a more tender sentiment would doubtless have attached me to him for ever. We were married." At these words Madame d'Harville became pale; her resolution appeared to abandon her. Then she continued: "As soon as we were married, my father pressed me tenderly in his arms. Madame Roland also embraced me. I could not, before so many people, prevent this new hypocrisy; with her dry and white hand she squeezed my hand so as to give me pain, and whispered in a soft, perfidious voice, these words that I shall never forget: 'Think of me in the midst of your happiness; *for it is I who have made this marriage.*' Alas! I was far from comprehending the true sense of these words. Our marriage had taken place at eleven o'clock; we immediately got out into the carriage, attended by my maid and the old valet de chambre of d'Harville. We travelled so rapidly that we arrived at Paris before ten o'clock at night. * * * * *

You comprehend, then, my lord, the feelings with which I

returned to Paris, to that city where my mother had died scarcely a year before. We arrived at the Hotel d'Harville."

The emotion of the young woman was redoubled; her cheeks were covered with a burning red, and she added, in a heart-rending tone,

"It is necessary that you should know all; if not, I should appear too despicable. Well continued she, with desperate resolution, 'I was conducted to my apartment—I was left alone—d'Harville rejoined me. Notwithstanding his protestations of tenderness, I wept bitterly. But soon my husband seized my arm with a force sufficient to break it, uttering a dreadful cry. I tried in vain to escape from his iron grasp. I implored his pity—he heard me no longer; his face was contracted with the most violent convulsions; his eyes rolled in their orbits with a rapidity that paralyzed me; his contorted mouth was filled with a bloody foam; his hand still held me fast; I made one more effort; his stiffened fingers at length released their grasp, and I fainted, while d'Harville was still struggling in the paroxysms of this frightful attack. Such was, my nuptial night. Such was the vengeance of Madame Roland." "Unfortunate woman:" said Rodolphe, quite overcome. "I comprehend—epilepsy." Ah! it is frightful."

"And this is not all," added Clemence. "Oh fatal night, for ever accursed. My child, the poor little angel, has inherited this fearful malady!" "Your child also." "How?" "Her pallor—her weakness. It is this, my God! it is this; and the physicians think that the disease is incurable, because it is hereditary."

Madame d'Harville concealed her face in her hands; overcome by this mournful story, she had not the strength to utter a word.

Rodolphe also remained silent. • • • •

CHAPTER IV.

CHARITY.

Rodolphe blamed d'Harville much, but he promised himself to endeavour to excuse him in the eyes of Clemence, although well convinced, after her sad revelations, that the marquis was for ever alienated from her heart.

Thought succeeding thought, he said to himself, "From duty, I have kept myself away from a woman I loved, and who, perhaps, has for me a secret 'penchant.' Either from the unoccupied state of her thoughts, or from commiseration, she has just escaped the loss of honour and life for a fool whom she thought unhappy. If, instead of absenting myself from her, I had surrounded her with the attentions of love and respect, my reserve would have been such that her reputation would not have received the slightest stain; the suspicions of her husband would have never been awakened, while at this moment she is almost at the mercy of Mr. Charles Robert, and he will be, I fear, so much the more indiscreet as he has the less reason to be. And, besides, who knows now if, notwithstanding the perils she has run, the heart of Madame d'Harville will rest always unoccupied? All return towards her husband is henceforth impossible. Young, handsome, with a character sympathizing with all who suffer for her, what dangers! what obstacles! For d'Harville, what anguish, what sorrow! What a fate is his."

Clemence, leaning on her hand, her eyes wet with tears, her cheeks burning with confusion, avoided the looks of Rodolphe, so much had this revelation cost her.

"Ah, now," said Rodolphe, "I comprehend the cause of the sadness of d'Harville, a sadness I could not penetrate. I comprehend his regret—" "His regret," cried Clemence; "say rather his remorse: for never has crime been more coolly meditated." "A crime, madame!" "And what is it then, to bind himself by indissoluble ties to a young girl who confides in his honour, when he knows he is subject to a malady which inspires fear and disgust? What is it, then, to destine an unfortunate child to the same disease? What forced d'Harville to make two victims? A blind, insensate passion! No; he found my birth, my fortune, myself, convenient. He wished to make a suitable marriage, because a bachelor's life had become tiresome, without doubt." "Madame, pity at least!"

"Pity! Do you know who deserves my pity? It is my daughter. Poor victim of this odious union, how many nights, how many days have I passed near her! how many tears have I shed over her eventful lot?"

"But her father suffers the same horrible fate!"

"But it is her father who has condemned her to a sickly infancy, to a withered childhood, and, if she lives, to a life of retirement and sorrow; for she shall never marry. Oh, no; I love her too well to expose her some day to weep over her infant, as I weep over her. I have suffered too much from this treason to render me culpable, or an accomplice of a similar act."

"Oh! you are right; the vengeance of your stepmother is horrible. Patience: perhaps, in your turn, you will be revenged." said Rodolphe.

"What do you mean, my lord?" asked Clemence, astonished at the inflection of his voice.

"I have almost always had the happiness to see punished, Oh! cruelly punished, the wicked that I have known," added he, in a tone that made Clemence tremble. "But the next morning, what did your husband say?" "He avowed, with a savage naïveté, that the families to whom he was about to be united had discovered the secret of his malady, and broke the projected alliances. Thus, after having been twice repulsed, he has again—oh, this is too infamous: And yet, he is what is called in society a man of honour and probity."

"You, always so good, you are cruel."

"I am cruel, because I have been shamefully deceived. D'Harville knew I was kind, why did he not at once tell me the truth?"

"You would have refused him." "That would condemn him, his conduct was unworthy if he felt this fear." "But he loved you."

"If he loved me, should he have sacrificed me to his egotism? My God! I was so tormented, I was so anxious to leave my father's house, that if he had been frank, perhaps he would have touched me by the picture of his sufferings, of the solitude to which a fearful and fatal malady had consigned him. Yes, seeing him so upright, so unhappy, perhaps I should not have had the courage to refuse him; and, if I had thus taken the sacred engagement to submit to the consequences of my devotion, I should valiantly have kept my promise; but to compel my interest and pity, by first placing me in his power, and to require this interest, this pity, in the name of my duty as a wife—he who has betrayed his duties as an honest man—it is at once wicked and cowardly. Now, my lord, judge of my life: judge of my cruel decep-

tions. I had faith in the honesty of d'Harville, and he has most unworthily deceived me. His sad and timid melancholy had interested me, and this sad melancholy, which he said was caused by pious recollections, was only the consciousness of his incurable infirmity." "But, in short, was he a stranger, your enemy, the sight of his sufferings ought to soften your anger; your heart is noble and generous."

"But can I calm these sufferings? If my voice could be heard, if a grateful look could reply to my attentions: But no: oh! you do not know, my lord, how frightful it is to see a man tear himself like a wild beast, notice nothing, hear nothing, feel nothing, and only come out of this phrenzy to fall into a kind of fearful dejection. When my daughter has one of these attacks, I am almost wild; my mind is distracted. I kiss, weeping, her poor little arms, stiffened by the convulsions which destroy her. But she is my child—my child: and when I see her suffer thus, I curse a thousand times more her father. When the spasms are over, my irritation against my husband becomes less; then—yes—then I pity him: to my aversion succeeds a sentiment of sad commiseration. But, in short, have I married at seventeen only to experience these alternations of hatred and sorrowful commiseration? to weep over an unfortunate child, whom I shall, perhaps, not preserve." * * * * *

"I cannot express to you, madame, how much your story has affected me; from the death of your mother until the birth of your daughter, how many devouring sorrows, how many troubles were concealed. You, so brilliant, so much admired, envied."

"Oh! believe, my lord, when one suffers certain troubles, it is sad to hear it said, 'How happy she is.'"

"Is it not? Nothing is more painful; well, you are not the only one who suffers from the cruel contrast of what is, and what appears to be." "How, my lord!"

"In the eyes of everybody, your husband must appear still more happy than you are, since he possesses you; and yet is he not also much to be pitied? Can there be a more unfortunate life than his? His wrongs towards you are great; but he is frightfully punished. He loves you as you merit to be loved, and he knows you can only entertain for him an insurmountable repugnance. In his suffering, sickly child, he sees a constant reproach. This

is not all, jealousy also comes to torture him." "And how can I help that?" "Give him no cause to be jealous?" "So be it; but because my heart belongs to no one, will it belong the more to him? He knows that it cannot be so. Since the frightful scene I have related to you, we live separate; but in the eyes of the world I have for him all the regard that prudence commands, and I have told no one, except yourself, a word of this fatal secret." "And I assure you, madame, that if the service I have rendered you merited a recompense, I believe myself a thousand times repaid by your confidence; but since you wish to ask my advice, and that you will allow me to speak frankly to you—" "Oh! I entreat you, my lord."

"Let me tell you, that from not employing one of your precious qualities, you lose great enjoyments, which not only would satisfy the wants of your heart, but would divert you from your domestic sorrows, and would respond to this want of lively, poignant emotions, and I dare almost add (pardon my bad opinion of women,) to that natural taste for mystery and intrigue, which has so much empire over them."

"What do you mean, my lord?"

"I wish to say that if you would *amuse* yourself in doing good, nothing would please you, could interest you more."

Clemence regarded Rodolphe with astonishment. "And you must comprehend," continued he, "that I do not speak of your sending carelessly, almost with disdain, your bounty to the unfortunate, whom you do not know, and who often are not worthy of your bounty. But if you would *amuse* yourself like me, in acting from one time to another the parts of Providence, you would acknowledge that certain good deeds have often all the interest of a romance." "I have never thought, my lord, of this manner of disguising charity as an *amusement*," said Clemence, smiling in her turn.

"It is a discovery that I owe to my disregard for all that is 'ennuyeux,' a disregard with which I have often been inspired, above all, after a conference with my ministers. But to return to our *amusing* benefactions: I have not, alas! the virtue of those disinterested persons who confide to others the charge of bestowing their alms. If it was only in agitation to send one of my chamberlains to carry some hundreds of louis to each arrondissement of

Paris, I avow to my shame, that I take no great pleasure in the thing; while to do good as I understand it, there is nothing in the world more *amusing*. I hold to this word, because to me it says all; that which pleases, everything that charms, everything that is attractive; and truly, madame, if you will become my assistant, in some mysterious intrigues of this nature, you will see that, setting aside the nobleness of action, often nothing is more curious, more attractive, more pleasing, sometimes even more diverting, than these charitable adventures; and, besides, how many manœuvres to conceal your benefactions, how many precautions necessary to prevent your being known: how many different and powerful emotions, at the sight of poor and honest people who weep with joy at seeing you." "My God!" "Hold: the emotions of which I speak are about the same as you felt this morning in going to the Rue du Temple; simply clad, so as not to be remarked, you would also leave your house with your heart palpitating: you would also, inquiet and troubled get into a modest hack, the curtains of which you would let down so as not to be remarked; and then, also, casting your eyes from side to side for fear of being surprised, you would enter stealthily into some house of wretched appearance, just as you did this morning—I tell you, the only difference is, that you said to yourself, 'If I am discovered, I am lost;' and that you would say in this case, 'If I am discovered, I shall be blessed.' But, as you are modest concerning your own good qualities, you would employ all your cunning not to be blessed." "Ah, my lord," cried Clemence weeping, "you save me. I cannot tell you the new ideas, the consoling hopes, that your words awaken in me. You say truly, that to busy one's heart and mind to make one's self adored by those who suffer, is almost to love. What do I say? it is better than to love. When I compare the existence that I have a glimpse of, with that to which a shameful error might have led me, the reproaches which I address to myself become still more bitter."

"I should be much afflicted," said Rodolphe, smiling, "for my whole desire is to aid you to forget the past, and to prove to you only that the opportunities for diversion of the mind are numerous. The means of good and evil are often the same; the end alone differs. In a word, if the good is as attracting, as amusing, as the evil, why prefer the latter?"

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"It is perhaps too true," said Clemence, smiling. "Well, what say you? will you agree that we shall contrive together all sorts of benevolent enterprises; *charitable dissipations*, of which, as always, very good people shall be the subjects? We will have our rendezvous, our correspondence, our secrets, and, above all, we will conceal all from the marquis; finally, if you agree, we will be in lawful intrigue."

"I accept with joy, with gratitude, this association," said Clemence, gaily; "and to commence our romance, I will return to-morrow to these unfortunates, to whom this morning I could only give words of consolation; for, profiting by my trouble and affright, a little lame boy stole the purse you gave me. Ah! my lord, added Clemence, and her face lost its expression of sweet playfulness which had for a moment animated it, "if you knew what misery, what a horrible picture; No, no; I did not believe such unfortunates existed. I blame myself, and accuse my destiny." Rodolphe, not wishing Clemence to see how much he was touched at this retnrn to herself, which proved the beauty of her mind, answered gaily, "If you will permit it, I will except the Morels from our partnership; you must let me take charge of these poor people, and you will promise me, above all, not to return to that house, for I live there." "You, my lord? What pleasantry."

"Nothing more serious. A modest lodging, it is true; two hundred francs a year, besides six francs for my housekeeping, freely granted each month to the porteress, Madame Pipelet; add to this, that I have for my neighbour the prettiest grisette of the quarter of the temple, Mlle. Rigolette; and you will agree, that for a merchant's clerk, who earns eighteen hundred francs a year, it is quite suitable."

"Your presence, so unhoped for in this fatal mansion, proves that you speak seriously. Some generous action attracts you there, doubtless; but for what good work do you reserve me, then? what part do you destine for me?"

"That of an angel of consolation, and, excuse the villanous word, a demon of cunning and address; for there are certain delicate and geievous wounds, that the hand of a woman alone can dress and cure: thus it is with some unhappy beings, so proud,

so gloomy, so mysterious, that it needs a rare penetration to discover them—an irresistible charm to acquire their confidence." "And when can I display this penetration, this address you suppose I possess?" asked Madame d'Harville, impatiently. "Soon, I hope; you will have a conquest to make worthy of yourself, but it will be necessary to employ your machiavelain resources."

"And on what day will you confide this great secret?"

"Do you see, you are now at the rendezvous? Can you do me the favour to receive me in four days?" "So late?" said Clemence, naively. And the mysteries? and the prudence? Judge, then; if we are thought to be accomplices, they will be afraid of us; but, perhaps, I shall have need to write you. Who is this old woman who brought me your letter to-night?"

"An ancient servant of my mother's—surety and discretion itself." "It is, then, to her I will address my letters; she will hand them to you. If you have the goodness to direct to me, 'Mr. Rololphe, Rue Plumet.' Your servant will put your letters in the post office." "I will put them in myself, my lord, as I take my usual walk." "Do you often go out alone, and on foot?" "When the weather is fine, almost every day." "Really. It is a custom which every woman should follow. But shall I not see d'Harville to-night?"

"No, my lord; the scene of this night has so much affected him, that he is suffering," said Clemence in a low tone. "Ah! I comprehend," answered Rodolphe, sadly; "come, come, courage. Your life wanted an aim, your sorrows a palliative, as you said. Leave me to believe that you will find this relief in the future, of which I have spoken to you; then your soul will be filled, so filled with sweet consolation, that resentment against your husband, will perhaps, no longer find a place. You will feel for him some of the interest that you have for your child. And as to this little angel, now that I know the cause of this malady, dare I almost tell you to hope a little." "Can it be possible, and how?" cried Clemence, clasping her hands with gratitude.

"I have for my ordinary physician a man quite unknown, but very learned; he lived for a long time in America. I remember that he has spoken to me of two or three cures, almost marvelous, made by him of slaves afflicted with the same disease." "Ah! my lord, can disappointment be possible?"

"Take care not to hope too much: the deception would be too cruel: only let us not altogether despair." "What do I not owe you?" said Clemence, in a faltering tone; "you relieve me; you make me, in spite of myself, hope for my child; you point out to me a future which will be at once a consolation, a pleasure, and a reward. Was I not right when I wrote you that, if you would come here to-night, you would finish the day as you commenced —by a good action."

"And add at least, madame, one of those good actions—full of attraction, pleasure, and charms," said Rodolphe, rising; for half-past eleven had just struck. "Adieu! my lord; do not forget to give me news soon, of these poor people in the Rue du Temple."

"I will see them to-morrow morning; for I was, unfortunately, ignorant that this little cripple had stolen your purse, and these poor creatures may be in a sad extremity. In four days, do not forget it, I will come and explain to you the part you have to play. I only now have to tell you, that a disguise will perhaps be necessary."

"A disguise. Oh! what joy; and which, my lord?" "I cannot tell you yet. I will leave you the choice."

CHAPTER V.

MISERY.

The reader has doubtless not forgotten that an unfortunate family, the head of which, a journeyman jeweller, named Morel, occupied the garret of the house in the Rue du Temple.

We will conduct him to this sad abode.

It is five o'clock in the morning. Without, the silence is profound, the night dark and frosty: it snows.

A candle, sustained by two sticks of wood on a little square plank, hardly pierces, with its yellow flickering light, the darkness of the garret—a narrow nook, ceiled by the sloping roof, which forms with the floor a very acute angle. The greenish tiles were everywhere visible. The partitions were plastered with mortar, blackened by time, and covered with cracks and rents, through which could be seen the worm-eaten laths: a door

off its hinges shewed the way to the staircase. The floor, of a colour without a name, tainted, sticky, is covered here and there with bits of decayed straw, with old rags, and with those large bones which the poor buy of the most wretched retailers of rotten meat, to gnaw the cartilages which may yet adhere to them.

Such frightful disorder always announces either misconduct or honest misery, but so desperate, so overwhelming, that the man, annihilated, degraded, feels no more the will, nor strength, nor need, to get rid of it; he crouches there like a beast in his den. During the day, this hole is lighted by a narrow oblong window, made in the roof, with a glazed sash, which opens and shuts on a hinge. At the time of which we speak, a thick coating of snow covered this window.

On the table, which was covered with stains of grease and tallow, shone and sparkled a handful of diamonds and rubies of the finest water. Morel was a workman in real, and not false stones, as he said, and as they thought in the house. Thanks to this innocent deception, the stones which were confided to him seemed of such small value, that he could keep them with him without fear of their being stolen.

So much riches placed at the mercy of so much misery; we will not speak of the probity of Morel.

Seated on a stool without a back, overcome by fatigue, by cold, by sleep, after a long winter's night passed in labour, the jeweller has let fall on the table his weary head, his benummed arms; his face touches the grindstone, which is placed horizontally on the table, and ordinarily put in motion by a little wheel turned by hand; a saw of fine steel, and other utensils, are scattered around: the artisan, of whom one only sees the bald head, surrounded by grey hair, is dressed in an old coat of coarse net, which he wears next to his skin, and a wretched pair of cotton trousers; his slippers in tatters, scarcely covered his feet, blue with cold.

There reigns in this garret a cold so intense, so penetrating, that the artisan, notwithstanding the kind of sleep into which he is plunged from exhaustion, shivers at times from head to foot.

The length of unsnuffed candle-wick announces that Morel has slept for some time; his oppressed respiration is alone heard; for the other six inhabitants of this garret are not asleep.

Yes, in this narrow garret live seven persons.

Five children, the youngest four years of age, the eldest hardly twelve; and their infirm mother; and then a woman of fourscore —the mother of their mother—an idiot.

Except the father of the family, a moment overcome because his strength is exhausted, no one sleeps: no, because cold, hunger, sickness, keep their eyes open—wide open.

One does not know how rare and precious sleep is for the poor, in which they recruit their strength and forget their sorrows. They awake so joyful, so refreshed, so much recruited for their labours, after one of these beneficent nights, that the least religious feel a vague sense of gratitude, if not towards God, at least towards sleep—and he who blesses the effect, blesses the cause. On beholding the frightful misery of this artisan, compared with the value of the stones which have been confided to him, one is struck with one of those contrasts, which at once depresses and elevates the soul.

But to return to this specimen, alas! too real, of frightful poverty and misery. The jeweller possessed but one thin mattress and a piece of covering, which were devoted to the use of the idiotic grandmother, who, in her stupid and ferocious wilfulness, would not share her wretched bed with any one.

At the beginning of winter she had become furious, and had almost stifled the youngest of the children, who had been placed alongside of her—a little girl of four years, afflicted for some time with phthisic, and who suffered too much from the cold in the straw where she had slept with her brothers and sisters.

At a little distance from the resting-place of the grandmother is spread out the straw bed which serves for the five children, and in this manner: two incisions were made in the ticking, one at each end; then the children are slipped into the damp and musty straw; the ticking serves both for blanket and coverlid. Two little girls, one of whom is dangerously sick, huddled together in one end, three little boys in the other.

They are all dressed, if some miserable rags can be called clothing. Their flaxen hair, all uncombed and tangled, which their mother allows to grow, because it is some protection from the cold, half covers their pale, attenuated faces. One of the boys with his stiffened fingers, draws to his chin the ticking to cover himself

the better: the other, fearing to expose his hands to the cold, holds the end between his chattering teeth; the third one presses closely to his two brothers.

The second of the two girls, sinking under the phthisic, reclines languidly her poor little face, already of a bluish and morbid hue, on the icy bosom of her sister of five years, who tries in vain to warm her between her arms and the straw with anxious solicitude. On another straw bed is stretched out the wife of the artisan, groaning, exhausted by a slow fever, and by a painful infirmity which has prevented her rising for some months.

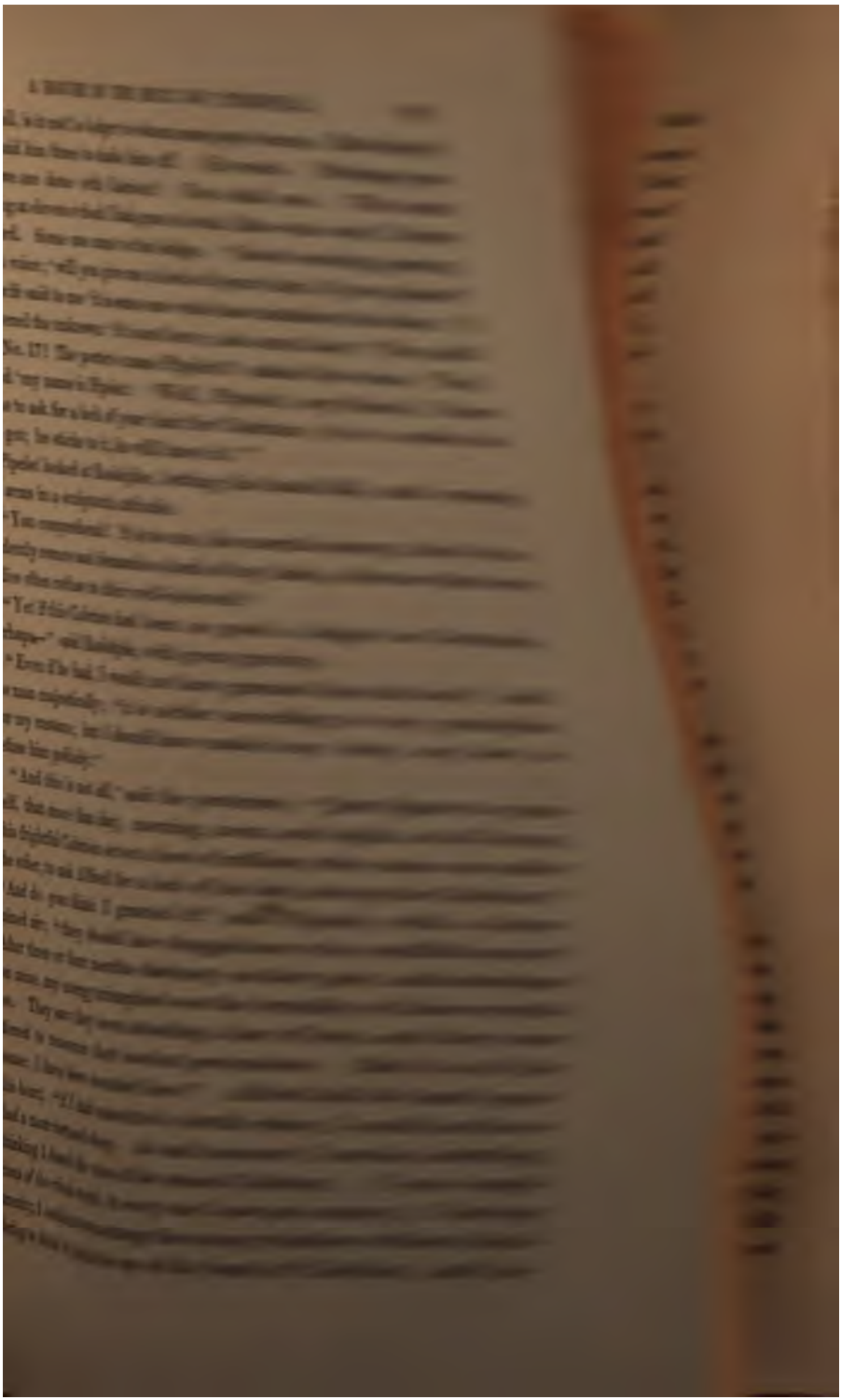
Madeleine Morel is thirty-six years of age. An old blue cotton handkerchief, tied around her head, glaringly sets forth the bilious colour of her bony face. Her eyes are surrounded by deep brown circles; the blood flows from her chapped and feverish lips. Weak, feeble, with no energy, she had remained honest because her husband was honest; left to herself, poverty would have overcome and driven her to crime. She loved her husband and her children; but she had neither the courage nor the strength to restrain her complaints on their common misfortunes. The jeweller was often obliged, although his labour alone supported the family, to leave his work to console the poor valetudinarian. Under a wretched covering of coarse cotton, which was spread over his wife, Morel had placed some clothes so old and ragged that the pawnbrokers had refused to receive them. A furnace, a stove, and a cracked earthen pot, two or three cups, a bucket, a washing machine, a stone jug, placed under the angle of the roof near the disjointed door, which the wind shakes each moment, is the whole property of this family. This desolate scene is lighted by the candle whose flame, agitated by the wind which whistles through the crevices of the roof, now casts its pale and flickering light on so much misery, and now illuminates with a thousand fires the diamonds and rubies exposed on the workbench of the sleeping artisan. With an involuntary movement, the eyes of these miserable beings—all awake, all quiet, from the grandmother to the youngest child—are fixed instinctively on the jeweller, their only hope, their only resource. In their selfishness, they are troubled to see him thus inactive, thus overcome by labour. The mother thought of her children; the children thought of themselves.

The idiot appeared to think of nothing. Yet suddenly she sat

[tender you my humble duties. I felicitate nature for
placed you on a level with these monsters of artists!"
! monsters?" asked Rodolphe. Pipelet, instead of an-
ted his two hands towards the ceiling of the lodge,
l a sort of angry moan.
are the people that have poisoned the life of Alfred;
rendered him so melancholy," whispered Madame
Rodolphe. Then, speaking loud and in a careless
ıe said, "come, Alfred, be reasonable, don't think
blackguard; you'll make yourself sick; you won't be
any dinner."
[will have courage and reason," answered Pipelet, with
l and sorrowful dignity. "He has done me much harm;
ın my persecutor, my executioner, for a long time; but
pise him. Painters!" added he, turning to Rodolphe,
y are the pest of a house; they are its 'bacchanals,' its

ıave had a painter for a lodger?"
we had one!" said Pipelet, with bitterness, "a painter
l himself Cabrion." At this recollection, notwithstand-
parent moderation, the porter clenched his fists convul-

his the last person who occupied the room that I am
ire?" asked Rodolphe.
o; the last lodger was a good, worthy young man, called
but before him was this Cabrion. Ah! since his de-
e has almost made me mad, stupid."
ou regret him so much?" asked Rodolphe.
on! regret!" answered the porter, in a stupor; "regret
Why, now, just imagine, that Bras-Rouge paid him two
et him away; for we had been unfortunate enough to
a lease. What a wretch! You can have no idea, the hor-
s he played on us, and the other occupants. To speak
ı of these jokes, there is not a wind instrument of any
ın that he has not basely made his accomplice to debase
rs. Yes, from the hunting horn to the serpent, he has
l, pushing his villainy so far as to play false, and to blow
for hours together. Oh, it was enough to make one crazy.
re more than twenty petitions sent to Bras-Rouge, to turn
h out. Finally, they got rid of him by paying two terms.



up, covered her bosom with her long yellow arms, looked at the light, winking, then rose softly, dragging after her, like a winding sheet, her ragged covering. She was very tall; her shaved head appeared proportionally small; her under lip moved with a spasmodic movement; she advanced cautiously towards the work-table, like a child about to commit a misdeed. When she was near the candle, she held to the flame her two trembling hands their thinness was such that the light shone through them, giving a sort of livid transparency.

Madeleine Morel followed from her bed the smallest movements of the old woman; she, continuing to warm her hands at the flame of the candle, looked down, and appeared to examine with imbecile curiosity the rubies and diamonds which sparkled on the table.

Absorbed in this contemplation, the idiot burned her hands in the candle and uttered a hoarse cry.

At this noise Morel awoke with a start, and quickly raised his head. He was about forty years of age, with a fine, open, intelligent face, but wrinkled—faded by poverty; an unshaved grey beard of many weeks' growth covered the lower part of his face, which was marked with the smallpox; his inflamed eyelids were red from the effect of his midnight vigils. * * *

Awakening with a start, the jeweller found himself face to face with the idiot. "What is the matter? what do you want, mother?" said Morel; then he added in a low tone, fearing to awaken the family, whom he thought asleep:—

"Go to sleep, mother—don't make any noise; Madeleine and the children are asleep." "I am not asleep—I am trying to warm Adèle," said the eldest of the little girls. "I am too hungry to sleep, said one of the boys; "it was not my turn to sup last night as my brothers did with Madame Rigolette." "Poor children," said Morel; "I thought that you were asleep, at least."

"I was afraid to awake you, Morel," said his wife," otherwise I would have asked for some water; I am very thirsty; I have the fever on me." "Presently," answered the workman; "only I must first get your mother to bed—come, leave my jewels alone, said he to the old woman, who wished to take a large ruby, the sparkling of which had attracted her attention. "Come, go to bed, mother," repeated he.

"This, this," answered the idiot, showing the precious stone she coveted.

"I shall be angry," said Morel, raising his voice, to frighten the old woman, whose hand he softly repulsed. "My God! Morel, how thirsty I am: come, give me some drink." "But how do you think I can do it? I cannot leave your mother with the jewels—she may love another diamond as she did a year ago—and God knows what it has cost us; this diamond—and what, perhaps, it will yet cost us." "Felix, since you are not asleep, go and give some drink to your mother." "No, no, I will wait; he will take cold," answered Madeleine.

"I shall be no colder without the straw than within," said the child, getting up. "Ah now, come, come, will you stop," cried Morel, in a threatening tone, to drive away the idiot, who persisted in her endeavours to get hold of one of the stones.

"Mamma, the water is frozen in the jug," cried Felix.

"Break the ice," said Madeleine.

"It is too thick: I cannot." "Morel, do break the ice said Madeleine in an impatient tone," since I have nothing else to drink do not leave me to die of thirst." Oh, my God! what patience; but how can I do it? I have your mother in hand," cried the unhappy workman. He could not compel her to retire to her bed, and beginning to be irritated at the resistance she met with, she uttered a sort of angry growl. "Call her then," said Morel to his wife; "sometimes she will listen to you."

"Mother, go to bed; if you are good, I will give you some coffee, that you like so much." "This, this," answered the idiot, seeking this time to get possession of the coveted jewel by force. Morel kept her off with management, but in vain. "My God! you know well enough that you will never control her without the whip," cried Madeleine; "it is the only way to make her quiet." "Yes, it must be; but although she is foolish, to threaten an old woman with a whip is revolting to me," said Morel.

Then addressing the old idiot, who tried to bite him, and whom he held back with one hand, he cried in a loud voice, "Take care of the whip; if you don't go to bed at once!" These threats were all in vain. He took a whip from under his work-bench, cracked it violently, and said, shaking it at the old woman," "Go to bed at once, go to bed!"

At the noise of the whip, the old idiot started quickly away from the table, then stopped, grumbled, and cast angry looks at her son-in-law.

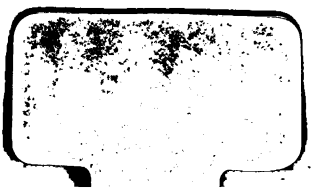
"To bed, to bed!" repeated he, advancing and snapping the whip anew. Then the idiot regained her couch backward, and shaking her fist at the jeweller.

He desirous of terminating this cruel scene, and to give his wife drink, advanced very close to the idiot, and again snapped his whip loudly, saying, "To bed immediately!"

The old woman, in her fright, began to utter dreadful howls, threw herself on her couch, like a dog in his kennel, without ceasing to howl.

The frightened children, thinking that their father had struck the old idiot, cried, weeping,

"Don't beat grandmother, don't beat her!"

It is impossible to describe the effect of this dismal scene, accompanied by the supplicating cries of the children, the furious howlings of the idiot, and the low complaints of the artisan's wife.

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